

Focus Group 1 – 29 Oct 2025 Transcription

PGCert – Action Research Katriona Beales

Transcribed using Adobe Transcription software via UAL license January 7, 2026.

The recording was done in two sections – part a (dur. 29m10) and part b (dur. 1.09) as some interesting thoughts were shared after the first part of the recording finished.

To help my understanding of this text I have highlighted some relevant passages.

Highlight colour	Comments or discussion about...
Text	Live Transcription
Text	Humour
Text	Mental Health
Text	Lecture Theatre environment
	Redacted student names as per the Ethical Action Plan and Participant consent forms.

Present:

6 students.

5 are participants who volunteered from larger student rep group. All 5 signed consent forms. All participants are female and use she/her pronouns. 2 are international students with English as a second language. The 6th student is also female international student and a student rep and asked to attend in an observational capacity not as a participant. In alignment with the Consent form or student names have been removed from the transcription.

Transcription – part a

00:00:00

KB: Oral processing of information, so it'll help me record the meeting. So I'm just doing it on my laptop, and then I will get it transcribed afterwards. And I'll make sure that your names are anonymized.

So, uh, year meetings, uh, they provide a particular challenge as a teacher because it's a large cohort. It's an opportunity to give a lot of information, some of which is quite important to convey accurately. Um, but it also can feel like very boring type of teaching, very one way. The power dynamics are weird in the lecture theatre because of the way that the architecture of the space is set up, and it doesn't really avail itself very well in terms of like moving around and connecting with each other. So it poses quite a few challenges for

me in terms of like a teaching practice that I'm interested in and invested in. But I also think it's quite an important context as well. So that's why I've started thinking about these and wanting to develop them.

And, um, I'm not sure whether you will fill this out or didn't, but I've got the responses from the initial questionnaire, which I thought were quite interesting, and I'll just share these now. I'm not sure if you can see this. Sorry, I should have put this on the big telly.

Um, so the first question was, do your meetings help develop a sense of community or belonging on the BA fine Art? I should say there's only twenty four responses. So it's a limited pool. Um, but about half of you said yes and half of you said no or unsure or could, but don't at the moment. So for me, that means that was actually a bit more positive than I thought it could be. But that means that some things could be improved if only fifty percent of people feel that there's a sense of community there. We could do. There's scope there for that to be improved. Um, and this was interesting for me as I just put out a few ideas that I've been toying with in terms of developing the meetings. And it's not an exhaustive list, so you might have your own thoughts as well. Um, but the three most popular ones were the live captioning. So it'd be great to kind of talk a bit more about what you feel is happening with that and whether that's useful. Um, a regular slot for sharing student work, which everyone seems to be in favour of, (laughter) but no one is volunteering to do. So that's also kind of an interesting dynamic. Um, and then, uh, like inviting guests from different aspects of Chelsea's life to speak more. So you get to see people face to face and hear from them direct. I think that's really useful.

Um, and then there were three other people who had additional ideas and they wrote, uh, sharing more career or volunteer opportunities, more career related information. We kind of cover that in professional practices. So but that is something I could look at. Um, and interactive activity. Activity. I think that's often very useful, isn't it? Um, a link to an online task or a short creative task to build something with the people sitting next to you? That sounds pretty good. Um, and then someone has written, given better understanding of the criteria for the unit. So the idea that it is an important environment for clear communication about the courses, obviously like an ongoing concern, I can't just this I need to continue that in some way.

So, um, first off, I thought and then there was people completed the sentence; "Developing community on the course is important because..." And there were some quite nice thoughts that came through here, but we don't really need to... "It allows me to make connections beyond my social circle." I thought that was quite good. Um, "I could find confidence to share my work more" because that is also, you've got a captive audience. Really. So there is an opportunity there to practice and flex your confidence muscles. Um,

yeah. Uh, "You never know when you might need the right person to help you out." I'm not sure exactly what that means. Um, yeah.

So I can circulate this to you guys, but initially, I kind of like to hear your thoughts on these: Live captioning; a regular slot for sharing student work; and these invited guests in. Any other ideas that you might have? Because I think I'm going to kind of focus on developing those three things. But maybe should we start off talking about the live captioning? What do you think about that?

V: I think it's super helpful. Um, sometimes I struggle with just like comprehending what people are saying. And it's like, I mean, it's helpful for making notes as well. Um, I think it's I think it's like overall a really, like, positive thing. But I do wish there was a way to almost like, have the captions be recorded so you could go back to the meetings afterwards. Um, something I do like about the one p m, one p m. No, three p m lectures are that they are recorded.

KB: the year meetings are as well.

V: Oh they are. Yeah. Okay.

KB: Yeah. They're up on Moodle.

V: Yeah. Sorry. That's that's on me then.

KB: No, no that's fine. Um, yeah. But I think it's important for access that things are recorded because we all have different modes of comprehending information and it's often helpful to go back over things. I find that, um. Any other. Thank you. [REDACTED] any other thoughts on the live captioning?

L: It's not me personally, but I did. Was talking to someone the other day and they were just they really liked that captioning. But then you were talking to them and they were saying like when some artist's name came up because it wasn't written down on the board. The live captions didn't actually know what's actually the name was. And they kind of like went, ah. And it was like some random, like, gibberish. It didn't actually like because it kind of felt like obviously like technology, isn't it? So I wonder if like that mixed with maybe like more clearer captioning of but I guess this is maybe more relevant for three p m lectures.

KB: But no, it's useful. Yeah. I think generally if we're talking about specific artists, we need to have the name on a slide.

L: Yeah, I think they will.

KB: But the live captions often struggle with like particularly, unfortunately, the racial bias within the AI. The transcription AI does mean that certain um like names are misspelt more

than others. So it's also because we're using an English language. Uh, it does it in other languages as well, but it doesn't seem to get that. We obviously talk about like, everyone's from lots of different places, and we talk about them all in English, and that's normal. Um, so I think that's interesting to think about how we can alleviate a bias as much as possible.

L: And I know a lot of people like I think it definitely is evident to us at the end of the year, the year meetings get less and less full because a lot of people don't actually like they don't actually think they're that useful. Yeah. Um, and I do, because I think, you know, it sets out what you're meant to do for the week, you know, and it tells you, you know, like, this is like what we're supposed to be doing sometimes it adds add a lot more information about like the final project and stuff. But like a lot of people just go like, oh, I'm just gonna sign in and leave. And it's like, okay, yeah, you know what I mean?

KB: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's part of the reason I want to think about this, because I want to do something that people not just perceive to be useful, but actually is.

L: And I like when, when everyone was sharing it, I remember when everyone was sharing the work at the end of last year. It was so fun to like, watch and like I really enjoyed it. I didn't participate, I didn't put any of my work up there, so maybe I'm part of the problem, but it was like really enjoyable almost.

KB: Um, how do you. Sorry, [REDACTED].

00:08:27

J: So one thing about like about the really useful like things to both. Like for me, one thing I like about is like, it's kind of like a blend of lecture and like, announcement. So, like, so like last week was it was all about like Meditation and things. And like I had like an example of artist works and like how we could like kind of like, um, apply it into our projects and like all this explanation and like, um, and like references were like really helpful to me personally. And I feel like there if there could be more often like instead of just like lists of announcement or like things to do. Yeah.

KB: Yeah. So more, uh, kind of lecture, more teaching element. Is that what you're saying?

J: Yeah. More hints for the projects that you're doing or like having a glimpse of like what it's going to be like.

KB: So other other previous year's work, previous students work as well. Yeah. Yeah I think that's helpful isn't it. Yeah.

L: That was really good. Yeah. That was yeah. Yeah.

V: That's something that could be helpful as well as having like exemplars of like what is graded well. And I think sometimes it does get a bit confusing what the sort of like standard of work should be.

J: Yeah.

V: Um, so I think that can be helpful.

L: And also I don't this is not guaranteed, but I don't know if there's a set syllabus you change every year like Intra-Actions. Um. Uh, yeah. I don't know if that's like a set thing or you just like, sort of come up with it and like, you know, go along that theme for the whole year?

KB: Intra-Action is just the name of unit five. Okay. So it's the first, just here [points to the wall], unit five 'Intra-Action'. Unit six 'Constellations'. Unit seven 'Fields'. Unit eight 'Entanglements'. So those are kind of like the overarching names for our units. Um, and we've just revalidated the curriculum, so it will stay like that. Yeah.

L: No I'm not. Yeah. I was just wondering, like, if it's like, um...

KB: Yeah, we we develop. This is an interesting question. Maybe outside of the context of year meetings, but but, um, in terms of thinking about this sort of reflexive teaching practice. So we have these kind of, um, units that have certain things that are fixed. But then within that there is quite a lot of leeway to develop things each year. So the collective exhibition is kind of fixed. Working in collectives is kind of fixed, but there's lots of things in and amongst all of that that can ... be different or modified in certain ways.

00:11:14

O: Um, sorry, when I was here because I was here like two or three years ago, and then I got kicked out of my course because of my lack of... the lack of community in the year. I can definitely see big changes. And when I came back, I... especially with your lectures, I felt like, you know, when you made this [signal] that thing happen [referring to the year meeting that week in which I had taught them a hand signal describing relationship between research and practice], I feel like that was obviously some people were like, that's cringe or whatever. [laughter] But it was...

KB: I am cringe! (laughs)

O: I enjoyed it. Like I liked, I like, I like that you made us talk to people as well. Especially because I'm like, didn't know anyone and I felt very much more involved. But also on top of that...

KB: remind me your name.

O: Joanna.

KB: Joanna. (repeats) Sorry.

O: Yeah. There are so many factors to like... why people don't get involved. And there's like, the hierarchy of, like, the intersectional [audio not available due to passing traffic] like mental health wise that's why I wasn't getting involved. People being shy. Like lack of confidence. And because now that I'm older, my prefrontal cortex is like, you know, "help the community", which is why I'm here, even though I'm scared of speaking to people. But yeah, I think it's going in a good direction. Mhm. That's what I'm saying

KB: [REDACTED] thank you. Um, and thank you for being so vulnerable then as well. Um, and also I'm sorry... about previous experiences. Um, uh, genuinely, I really care about community. Um, and I also see it as kind of like a crucial part of my role, that there is a sense of community amongst the course. And I think year meetings can hold some kind of... play a role. It's one element, but it can play a role. And I also do think there's a link to mental health, both as I reflect on my own experience of mental health, you know, which is of course like this (does hand signal going up and down). Um, but also as I speak to lots of you who've got baseline high level of anxiety because life is incredibly challenging externally. And then there's pressure here. There's pressure from family. You know, there's lots of you. Most of you are juggling a lot. Um, but I do feel that having peers, having a sense of belonging, having a sense of community helps us navigate those pressures, and it helps alleviate anxiety as well. And there's evidence of this. It's not just my feeling amongst the mental health community. There's lots of evidence, for example, that having a face to face interaction with someone like enables you to feel more dopamine than interacting with someone through a screen. Um, so I think, you know, we're all physically in this place at once in a year meeting. What can we do? I mean, it's interesting that you picked this physical.

O: Yeah.

00:14:10

KB: Um, would you like to see more kind of literal 'activity' where we're physically moving in the space?

O: I like the idea that someone had about, um, making something with, like, someone next to you.

KB: Yeah.

O: Something more, like tangible. Yeah.

KB: Should we do that?

Group: Uh, yeah. Yeah.

J: I think I also remembered the in your lecture there was reading the manifesto. Yeah, it was fun.

Group: Yeah.

V: I think one of the issues as well is that, like moving around in that space is hard, especially when there's a lot of people there. But something like working with people around you, maybe not even necessarily next to you, because I know, like I sit next to people I know, but I don't necessarily sit like in front of or behind people I know.

L: Yeah, that's really smart. Yeah.

V: And something I do find is like, I mean, I guess this is just everywhere, but especially here, it's there's a lot of small groups of people who know each other but don't really know everyone else.

J: Yeah. So, yeah.

L: And this is a bit of a 3D question.

KB: Is there any way like I love a 3D question. What is this? That's [REDACTED] bringing it outside the box language here.

L: Uh, introducing like, you know, across year groups. Yeah. In these lectures, I wonder if like, you know, year one, year two, year two, year three, anything like that.

KB: We do that in the professional practice, which is on Tuesday afternoons, which hardly anyone from second year was at all.

L: Is that the one with the lecture? Oh,

KB: It's the one to do with.. We're trying to build in for you a kind of sense of what possibilities are outside art school. But I think for a lot of second years, you're engrossed in where you are exactly right now, and it's hard to build in the time because it's taking time out for workshops or whatever.

V: Um, but yeah, I think professional practice should be like the lecture should be a little bit more emphasized because so many people will be like, I, I feel like, uh, the course doesn't encourage you to like, it doesn't teach you enough about the industry, but it does, and you just don't know about it.

KB: Yeah, it's an interesting dynamic, isn't it? Because quite often at the end of the year, I'll get someone saying to me, we didn't have any professional development. And I'm like, well, I've spent a long time programming a whole series of talks about that. Um, but yes, I think, well, I can give this a plug in the year meeting.

V: The Padlet for that should also be shared, because I didn't know there was a Padlet until like, yesterday, but I'm also not sure if it's up today because I could find the one for last year, but I can't find the one for this year.

KB: Yeah, okay, I will do. I'll get on that and circulate that. Some of that is it came together quite late the Padlet, right. Um, and it's not someone in my team that's setting it up, but, um, I haven't circulated it. Now, it does exist, so I will do that.

V: Um, like like previous year's ones in the current one should be shared because...

KB: the previous ones are so useful, isn't it? Yes. Um, okay.

KB: Um, in terms of the year meetings coming up? Um, there's three year meetings in November. Um, I put the dates on here, I think third, tenth and seventeenth of November that I would like to kind of really focus on developing some of this stuff very explicitly. So I'm going to keep going with the live transcription, because that generally seems to have a thumbs up.

00:17:41

And I'm going to do some kind of I'm going to take up this suggestion from Joanna or this feedback from Joanna about the physical. And I'm going to. Would anyone like to work with me to design some kind of physical activity? Maybe we, I don't know, do like a walking exercise where we walk around the entire. I don't know how we would do this, but if anyone would like to work on that with me.

I: Yeah

KB: **let's do that. We'll design some kind of physical activity, and I'm sure it will be cringey. (laughter)** Um, one year I got everyone to shout at me. That was quite interesting. Because everyone was being incredibly quiet and I was like, okay, I just want to enliven this in some way.

Um, an artist or sort of creative activity. One of you was suggesting that... was, um, anyone interested in kind of developing a creative activity for me that we can take to one of these meetings.

[pause]

I've done something before with plasticine, where everyone has a small lump of plasticine, and they can play with it throughout the meeting. And then at the end you might have made a little thing and we can kind of collect all the small little sculptures together. Should we do that?

Group: Yeah. Yeah.

KB: Okay. Plasticine. Um, the only thing is, is tactile wise. I'm quite, um. Sensory. What's it called? Sensitive. Um, and it has got a sort of quite a sort of plastic-ness to it. So I'll bring some wet wipes and then everyone can get that feeling off their hands before they leave, because I don't like that.

(Laughter)

KB: Okay. Um, in terms of like students sharing work and encouraging that everyone seems to be into this, but people find it difficult to do. What can we do or I to support that? Or does any of you have a burning desire to share something?

V: I mean, I was thinking we should. Firstly, [REDACTED] runs an Instagram account. That's for the whole year group.

L: Yeah, I was just basically I was wondering, maybe if maybe, obviously with the people's consent who are in the videos, whether it might be a fun idea to put some of these videos up like the one I made, because I kind of try to make them weekly.

KB: You make a weekly video on Instagram?

L: Yeah.

KB: Oh, cool. Or like someone on the course doing something funny?

L: Um, yeah.

KB: Would you ask, um, would you select one and ask the person or people in it for consent and see if we can share it in a year meeting?

L: Yeah, I'm making one this week about where people are living in their bedrooms and like what they look like. Um, yeah.

KB: So that sounds super interesting.

L: Yeah. And yeah, I'm trying to, like, get some of the artists involved. Like, I talked to [REDACTED] about maybe submitting like a, like he wanted to submit a work, but like, he was like, oh yeah, I'll submit something I did like that's not what I was like. Yeah. Cool. And he was gonna submit like a video of him eating peanuts in front of a computer, but, like, it was

really funny. [REDACTED]? No. [REDACTED]. Um. [REDACTED] the guy that. [REDACTED]. Yeah. Okay. Amazing. Okay.

KB: I thought you meant [REDACTED] Who I just, I just, just yeah, it was Instagram. And [REDACTED] just seemed to live in different universes. Um, okay, so, uh, which is no shade to him because Instagram can be a horrible place, but this sounds like a lovely place on Instagram. And maybe I know you said that you don't like talking in front of people....

L: I wondered as well, maybe it's like the reps want to do, like a really funny video being, like, introducing themselves, like in a, in a sort of like news way, like a, I don't know, like, do you know what I mean? Like, and my friends like, did a video inviting everyone to a house party the other day. It was just sort of like inspiration. It was f*****. It was it was hilarious.

KB: I actually am friends with swearing. It's okay. Oh my transcription. (Laughter) Oh yeah, just I won't quote that bit. How about that?

00:21:53

L: But um, and it was just like really funny. And I just feel like, like humor and light heartedness and just taking the piss out of yourselves and other people is the way to make people feel comfortable and, like, not isolated. And.

V: Yeah.

KB: Okay. Um, fantastic. So, I mean, both those things are great. I mean, it would be fantastic to plug in the year meeting that there's an Instagram account for the year because I think that's great as a resource. If you're happy to make a video and share that in the year meeting, that would be fantastic. Are you happy to speak about it?

L: Oh yeah, I don't mind. Yeah. I just think about what I'm going to say.

KB: Okay, cool. Great. So let's definitely do that. That would be amazing. Um, also, does anyone have any work that they would like to share? Or it could be a reading...

V: I have an exhibition that my work is currently a part of, and it's on for like a very long time. Um, until like the end of January.

KB: So should we give that a plug? Yeah, let's give that a go. I've got, like, some posters up for it. Sorry, sorry.

L: I was gonna say like [REDACTED], because, like you and like some other people also sent me the exhibitions they're in. So should we, like, just put the posters up as well at the start of the. Yeah.

V: Cause, like, not a lot of people read Noticeboards, but if you have like a slideshow of like students either exhibitions or like art projects, things like that. Okay. Brilliant. Let's do that. Yeah, great. I think one of the things as well is that last year we had films showing, uh, at the start of lectures, and that was really helpful because it's engaging, but like for image work and like, like still images and things like that, it's a little bit harder to show these things. So I feel like just, you know, linking people to exhibitions or even open calls, like if students have open calls and things like that.

KB: Yeah. Okay, fantastic. So if you know of anything like that, tell me. A, I can circulate it over email. But also I can put it in...

V: I can email you right now.

KB: That would be so helpful. Um, that sounds really great. And then I think having people so if you get up to speak to that, that would be great. [REDACTED], um, we had someone last year, you know, some things that happened last year were, um, students showing moving image work, but we also had students doing like a live performance. Uh, we had a student do a sound, play a sound artwork, which was actually really interesting because the speakers are so good. So if you want to test out work... what I'll do this coming meeting is I will put in a thing about encouraging people to share work, and then we'll see what comes up. But if you can also maybe put your thought to whether you have something to share, that would be really great.

Group: Yeah.

Um, and then, uh, we're going to develop this idea of physical activity. [REDACTED], would you like to just [REDACTED], join the conversation with [REDACTED] and I.

O: Yeah.

KB: Great, okay. And then the other thing was about getting guests in. So Susie's going to come and speak about some workshops she's going to be doing. Um, but are there any other specific areas of Chelsea activity that you would like to understand or know about? And I can approach certain people and ask them to come to the year meeting and talk about it.

V: I think grading is a big one for people. Um, we've had like, um,

KB: well, we grade the work. Yeah. So it wouldn't be. It wouldn't be a guest to speak about that. No.

V: Okay. Yeah.

KB: Um, yeah.

L: I wonder if there's, like, enough signposting for workshops and the technical. I don't know, I don't know, I really...

KB: the room for error people?

L: That would be good.

KB: Okay. The other thing I was thinking about is someone from the mental health and wellbeing team or the chaplaincy team. No?

Group: Yeah. Yeah.

KB: Should I just ask all of them? (laughter) Yeah. Please come. Um. We need your help. All of us. (laughter)

V: Are so helpful.

KB: When?

V: In the, um, course rep meeting. The, um. Was it, like, school representative came by and I don't think most people, or like anyone, really knows that there is a school representative or who they are.

KB: The student union school rep?

V: Yes.

KB: I didn't know that. Uh, and the other person who would be really interesting for you guys? Yes, I will approach them. Um, if you can dig out their email address, that would be fantastic. Um, the other thing that would be really useful, I think we're coming up to the collective exhibitions. Is someone from the, um, CLS the loan store?

V: Yeah.

KB: Um, because they've got an amazing kind of set of resources there that lots of students don't know about. And it always surprises me... like really high-end cameras and stuff that you can borrow for, like, three quid a day. So. Um, okay.

00:27:05

KB: Well, there's loads to go on there. Um, thank you so much for your thoughts. We should stop now really? But, um, if you have anything that we haven't covered, um, or anything. Uh, let me just have a look at this, because I did make a plan for this meeting. Surprise, surprise. Which I haven't exactly followed. Um, surprise, surprise. Uh, this is why we plan things so that they change. Um, let me have a look. So we talked through the info sheet in the consent form. We talked through the initial questionnaire findings. Um, how do you

currently feel about your meetings? I feel like we've talked about that a bit. Um, and we tried it... we've talked about some strategies, and we've also got some of you leading on certain aspects of developing the meetings over the next three weeks. So. Excellent.

So we're going to try some things out over November. And then we're going to see we're kind of regroup. We'll have a feedback questionnaire that we circulate and we can design, uh, feedback. Maybe I'll put some questions together towards the end of November and ask you to sort of input on those. And then we can circulate that to everyone. And then we'll have a focus group meeting again, just this group on the tenth of December to sort of analyse what's happened and how you think about it and whether we've made a difference together or not. Yeah.

Group: Yeah. Amazing.

KB: Okay. Thank you. Thank you so much for your time. Um, really appreciate that. And if any of you at any point have got any further thoughts or things that you think I need to take into consideration, um, not just about year meetings, obviously. I'm here as your course, your year leader, more generally. Sorry. Um, yeah, but thank you so much. And I'm going to stop recording now.

Part B

Recording was restarted to capture a contribution at the end of the meeting.

KB: Um, [REDACTED] you just said something really interesting. Just say it again. Just so I remember...

J: Um, on top of showing, like, people's art, we should also show art fails every week to get other people involved who are, like, nonchalant and don't want to get involved with serious stuff such as the skateboarders that do not exist but wish they did. Maybe they will if we start.

KB: Okay, so if we have like a regular kind of like student showing slot and it can be an art fail, or it could be like a, you know, an art win, you know, like, um, it can also be something that... I think is brilliant, like using humor and also kind of dethroning a bit of the ego as well.

J: Yeah, I don't know, humor is important. Like, uh, what's it called? Social lubricant. Thank you.

KB: Yes, that's exactly what I was trying to get to when I didn't. Okay, stop that thought. All right. Oh, unless there's any other. Okay.