



ARC *Narratives* *Artefact*

***An interactive artefact for facilitating discussions
around developing anti-racist curriculums.***

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Staff Version



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References

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Introduction

What is the ARC Narratives Artefact?

This artefact is an interactive narrative story experience about colonialism and decolonisation in a university environment, told through multiple character voices that encompass the diversity of our student and staff experiences. The core characters and story narratives will be built on real world content and discussions, including those previously gathered as part of the Decolonising the Curriculum podcast series, as well as further student and staff engagement as the project develops.

By presenting fictionalised stories from the lived experience of students across our universities in Scotland in a narrative digital format, this project hopes to bridge the gap in the collective student and staff perception of the difficult and unknown conversations around race, colonialism and intersectionality more generally, we hoped to bring such concepts closer to sensitive but productive spaces of exchange and collaboration. We hope that the plurality of the voices in the project will highlight the diversity of our student body in Scotland and the emphasise the complexity of many of our students' lives.

The reflective aspect of this artefact will invite the viewer to feel closer to the characters and discussions as the narratives develop, as true to the nature of the topics themselves, it proposes the feeling that everyone, even those who only hear of some of these stories as “bystanders”, is invited and encouraged to engage in these conversations.

How did this artefact come about?

This artefact emerged from the work of two preceding years of a project that began as a QAA Scotland-funded [Collaborative Cluster on Decolonising the Curriculum](#), and involved colleagues and students from across our Scottish higher and further education institutions. Central to its ethos is staff-student partnership and it is inspired by anti-racist pedagogies (Fanon, 1952; Glissant, 1990) and the desire to share ‘untold stories’ (Shafak, 2021).

Who is it for?

This artefact is for all staff and students working in any educational setting in any context and country to explore either as part of a collective or individually. You can access it on your own or as part of a facilitation session.

Who created it?

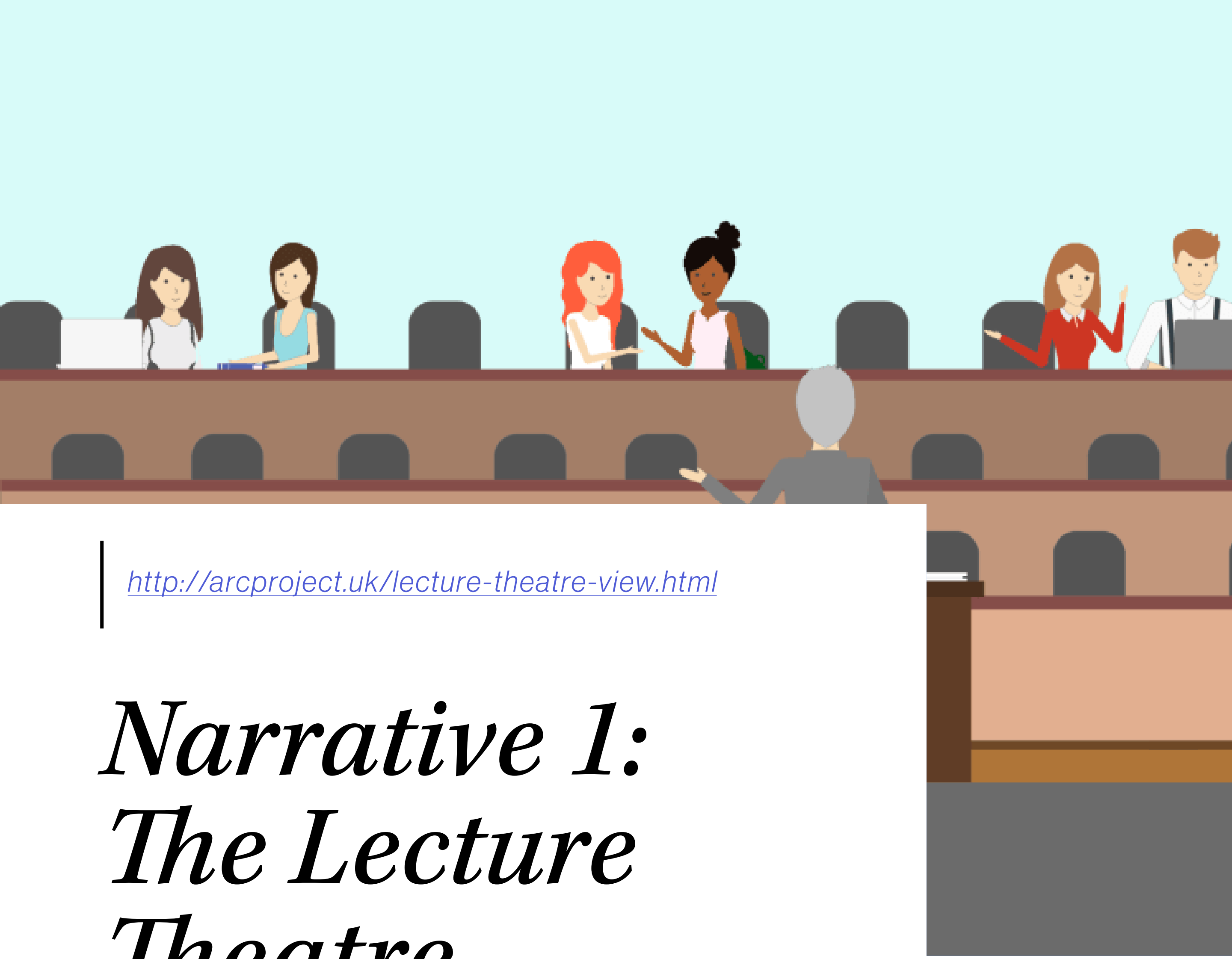
This is co-created by a staff-student partnership at Edinburgh Napier University
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Laura Galan, Student Intern, School of Computing & Built Environment
Catriona Cunningham, Head of DLTE

How do I access it?

Please click on <http://arcproject.uk/> to access the artefact.

This is the downloadable PDF version of the artefact with the staff prompts.

For the downloadable version with the student prompts, please refer back to the artefact download page.



<http://arcproject.uk/lecture-theatre-view.html>

Narrative 1: The Lecture Theatre

This narrative features a conversation in a lecture hall between two students, with intermittent prompts for introspective thinking. Use the URL above to view the interactive web page for this narrative, or read through the full script below.

Characters (Left to Right)

Dr Aaron Pearson

Anna

Sofia



Setting

A wide mid-sized lecture room that is only half full of students, all sitting towards the back. Quiet and informal conversation fills the room at the back, while no-one particularly wants to approach the teaching staff at any point beyond handing back the sign in sheet. Numerous students are intermittently messaging on their phones.

Storyline

Sofia and Anna are students in one of Aaron's lectures. Sofia relates closely to the lecture topic due to personal experiences and cultural knowledge, while Anna has gained some understanding through their friendship. Aaron has minimal connection to the lecture since he had to teach it last-minute due to his colleague's absence.



<http://arcproject.uk/lecture-theatre-view.html>

Narrative 1: The Lecture Theatre

Dr Aaron Pearson

Alright everyone, we're going to take a short break here.

Get yourselves a drink and have a little think about the social implications of what we've just been learning about this morning.

I'll be up at the front if anyone has any questions, otherwise we'll start back up in about ten minutes.

Students shuffle around the room in their seats, some getting up in small clusters to head to the canteen.

No one approaches Aaron, who sits by the front monitor and sips from his hydroflask while scrolling mindlessly on the computer.

Why would the teacher invite questions and then 'hide' in front of his computer?

What could he do differently to invite interaction with the students?

Is there anything in this opening scene that resonates with you and your practice?

Is this what you do?

Anna

Hey Sofia, did any of that seem... right to you? Like a lot of that sounded very missing-important-context right?

Sofia

Softly sighs while staring at the last slide on the projector.

Yeah, he didn't mention a word about any of the coups that have plagued the country before or after that revolution.

Or about the massive corporations who rushed in to bully the local workforce.

Or about the international policies and tariffs that prevented people from getting help.

Not a single word.

Anna

...

It must really suck to see all of that stuff not mentioned here. I'm really annoyed and sorry we have to sit through all this stuff without being able to talk back...

Sofia

Yeah, it's actually a joke.

Why is Sofia so upset here?

What do you think about Anna's role as the local Scottish student?

As a teacher, how do you feel about the criticism here?

Sofia

Like I get that Aaron's probably inherited the module from however long ago and he's probably not familiar with all of this background stuff, plus he's supposed to have like 60 students in here and he's only got like, 25 or something, so that's probably on his mind as well...



<http://arcproject.uk/lecture-theatre-view.html>

Narrative 1: The Lecture Theatre

Sofia

But still, yeah it does suck.

Anna

I don't suppose you want to do anything about it this time?

Especially since it's not just been today for this module, it happened last week as well when you were telling me about all that stuff about the media campaigns in Puerto Rico too that he didn't mention.

Interesting peer learning going on here – does this surprise you? Do you acknowledge this in your teaching?

Sofia

Yeah but at this point it's like, what can I actually do?

Why would he listen to me and make any changes to module halfway through the term?

It's not like I have anything to back up my points other than stuff I've lived through or heard from my family, so I can't point him to a source to put up the slides.

The student's feeling of powerlessness, where does it come from?

What can you do to ensure that students feel able to feed back, to be heard, in your classes?

Sofia

Plus a lot of the stuff isn't exactly written down anyways – how do you explain that the reason that no one gets the public transport to work is not just because of terrible infrastructure but also because the process to get a car is sponsored by companies who sell it as their “work-perk” and like to show off the idea that they enable their employees to have a “higher standard” lifestyle with a personal vehicle?

And then it becomes a whole thing with prestige and showing face and keeping up with your richer friends – none of that is something you can get people to admit to in an academic environment.

Bitterly looking at her laptop.

It's so unfair that he gets to be unaware of all of these social consequences and has the nerve to tell us to “have a little think about it”.

Anna

...

What do these comments tell us about the curriculum?

Sofia

Lucky him where it gets to be a “little think” problem and for us it's much more of a “massive pain in the ass” problem.

Anna

...now I feel bad for giving this module the benefit of the doubt at the start of the term.



<http://arcproject.uk/lecture-theatre-view.html>

Narrative 1: The Lecture Theatre

Sofia

Hmm? What do you mean by that?

Anna

I mean like, way back at the start I didn't know as much because we didn't talk a lot before, but even then I was kinda like, uh?? Why isn't he at least mentioning stuff like how the local economy affected things like the country's morale during the class fighting, stuff that should've been pretty obvious, y'know?

Sofia

Yeah?

Anna

I mean like, way back at the start I didn't know as much because we didn't talk a lot before, but even then I was kinda like, uh?? Why isn't he at least mentioning stuff like how the local economy affected things like the country's morale during the class fighting, stuff that should've been pretty obvious, y'know?

I mean like, way back at the start I didn't know as much because we didn't talk a lot before, but even then I was kinda like, uh?? Why isn't he at least mentioning stuff like how the local economy affected things like the country's morale during the class fighting, stuff that should've been pretty obvious, y'know?

Sofia

Oh no, no it's fine! I don't mind explaining things to you at all-

Anna

But that's the point isn't it? It's not fair that you have to explain it to me, and it's not fair that the lecturers don't know to mention it in the first place.

Literally the entire point of being in uni is to learn new things and develop yourself and your knowledge. With all this stuff, they're glossing over all the stuff you already know on a personal level and you don't get the same opportunity to develop like the rest of us, because really you'd be more suited to teaching the module than Aaron.

Sofia

Yeah, I know that, but really what could I even do? I'm just sitting here doing my job as a student when half the class hasn't even shown up.

Resentfully.

And now if we're talking about unfair responsibilities, how is it fair that it's my job to educate the lecturer on why his content sucks, just because I happen to know it first hand?

What do Anna's comments here tell us about our approaches to teaching, in terms of our assumptions and knowledges?

How can we invite our students' experiences and knowledge into our curriculum content?

Would you want to?



<http://arcproject.uk/lecture-theatre-view.html>

Narrative 1: The Lecture Theatre

Sofia

Quietly sighs and visibly tries to relax.

How is it that this always happens. Don't they do some kind of teacher training for this? You'd think they would, wouldn't you, with the amount of international students they apparently keep trying to bring in to pay their bills.

Anna

...hey, I'm sorry, I didn't mean it like that.

Sofia

No, it's fine, I know you didn't.

Anna

That's why it's not fine though, I should've realised the way I phrased it would've landed that way.

Sofia

Don't worry about it, seriously, we're good. I'm just happy someone in here is actually willing to listen to me rant about everything.

Anna

I mean, it's very justified ranting, so of course I want to hear it. The context that's just straight up missing in half of these classes is ridiculous.

Even if it wasn't justified I'd still listen anyways, it's what friends do and all that, right?

Sofia

Soft laugh.

Yeah, I suppose. Thanks anyways.

Anna

Mhm.

I know you said you don't really see a way to get all of these issues across to Aaron or guy who does the practical sessions, but is there anything I can do to help with that? Y'know, use my white privilege and local privileges for the betterment of the world type thing.

Small chuckle.

Sofia

Laughs comfortably.

Aww, that's real nice of you to put it that way.

I mean, short of asking him yourself or dumping a ton of links to articles in his inbox, I think we've got the same problem anyway where he controls our grades and we really don't wanna risk his... temperamental attitude towards us "youngins" to affect our marks.



<http://arcproject.uk/lecture-theatre-view.html>

Narrative 1: The Lecture Theatre

Anna

Young uns?

Sofia

Oh yeah, with all his “back in my day” bs it’s a wonder he’s even ended up teaching a module like this.

How would you describe the overall tone and language here?

Is there anything that surprises you in this last section, from a staff or student perspective, or that makes you uncomfortable?

Does Anna’s frustration make you feel sympathy towards Dr Aaron Pearson, given the context, or does it illicit a different emotion?



<http://arcproject.uk/common-space-view.html>

Narrative 2: Unravelling Groupwork



This narrative features a conversation in a common room space between three students, with intermittent prompts for introspective thinking. Use the URL above to view the interactive web page for this narrative, or read through the full script below.

Characters (Left to Right)

Li-Mei

Kacper

Sara



Setting

University common space over lunchtime, the space is crowded and many students like to eat their lunch here rather than the university canteen, which is quite expensive.

Storyline

A group of students are gathered together trying to get started on their group task. From the dialogue, it is clear the students trust each other and share their experiences as well as some of their frustrations with how their voices are heard by staff.



<http://arcproject.uk/common-space-view.html>

Narrative 2: Unravelling Groupwork

Li-Mei

Finishes chewing sandwich and begins to fold up the card packaging.

Have either of you heard from Callum, if he's coming in or not?

Kacper

Pauses eating his fruit tub.

He's not been online on Discord since yesterday, think the only thing he's put in the groupchat was when he reacted to your message earlier.

Sara

Snapping the clips on her now-empty Tupperware closed.

No, I've not heard from him either. I'd like to hope he'll show, but I suspect he's too mortified after what he said to you the other week. Still can't believe he's got away with that.

Li-Mei

Grimacing.

Of course, if he makes it in at all... racist p£\$%k

Well, him aside, what were you going to say earlier Sara? About the how we could interpret the assignment instructions?

Because I'm still confused about some parts, I wanted to hear what you were going to say about it.

What do you think is going on here?

What does it tell you about some of the group dynamics at play here?

Sara

Oh yes, that.

I mean, it's only slightly related, but essentially we were given a team project with some rather, hmmm, vague? Yes, vague outlines of what the bosses expected of us.

We were given a project that could've easily been interpreted 5 or more different ways, and the higher ups didn't respond well when we asked for clarification.

It was almost like they thought the team was incompetent and wasting time because we had to ask questions instead of just getting on with it.

Kacper

Oh god, I hate when that happens, it's like I wouldn't bother asking if I didn't think it was important right?

Sara

Nods in agreement.

Of course, that's what we were talking about as well when it happened.

Li-Mei

So, what did you do in the end? Did it at least turn out okay?



<http://arcproject.uk/common-space-view.html>

Narrative 2: Unravelling Groupwork

Sara

Not really, unfortunately. It turned out as we'd anticipated – higher ups didn't like what we turned in, even though we had tried to ask them to prevent it, blame got pushed onto the team leader, team leader split the blame between all of us... things didn't improve after that.

Actually, now I think about it, everyone from that debacle actually left the company separately within maybe half a year or a year after that.

Kacper

Oh shit. That really sucks. I'm sorry it turned out that way.

Li-Mei

Yeah, that sounds really awkward. Were you and the team alright afterwards?

Sara

Oh yes, we all managed to patch ourselves up and get out on decent terms with each other.

It was certainly an eye-opener about how certain people in authority respond to questions they don't see any worth in.

Checks her phone for the time, then places it back on the table.

Anyway, I think that's a bit more dramatic than what we've got here.

What is the point of this anecdote here, do you think?

It is clear that students relate their extracurricular life to their expectations of groupwork, and also how they interact as a result.

What do you do as a lecturer/teacher to scaffold groupwork?

How do you think about your role and its position of authority, of power?

What are the ways in which you enact it in your teaching, and how do you acknowledge it?

Sara

Did you ask John or Claire any of our points from our last chat at the end of yesterday's classes, Li-Mei?

Li-Mei

Uncomfortable smile.

Oh, uhm, not really...

I mean, I asked about some pointers for learning outcomes 3 and 4 from Claire, which was a little helpful, but I got a bit mentally tied up about all the things they didn't mention in the class session so I got a bit stuck before I could figure out how to ask more.

Kacper

Oh yeah, about all the completely missing context for the history of the language in both the east and the west right?



<http://arcproject.uk/common-space-view.html>

Narrative 2: Unravelling Groupwork

Kacper

God that was so annoying but I didn't wanna be the one to argue about it all over again, I had enough of that back in first year and all it got me was lecture about students "bEiNg dIsRuPtlvE". Worse than high school.

Li-Mei

Laughs.

Oh gosh yeah, I remember that. Dr Martins was so pissed off at you because you were right but he wasn't allowed to actually say that because it went completely against what he wanted to be teaching.

Oh that's happened to me loads, like when the teacher gave me the cold shoulder for that rant about racism?

Laughs again.

Good times.

Kacper

No, that was too funny.

Sara

Looking puzzled but amused.

Did this happen a lot then? When teachers would get mad at you for making a point in classes?

Li-Mei

Oh yeah, I mean it would make more sense if we were the disruptive type of students who shouted out and that type of thing, but we were actually fairly good about it when it happened.

Kacper

Yeah, like we would be actually doing the classwork and assignments and whatever properly but then there'd be something that we thought was worth talking about - us and the rest of friendgroup, not just us two - so we'd bring it up -

Li-Mei

- and they'd get really weird about it right? Some of them just completely brushed us off but others got really mad... which is really weird looking back now.

There are some interesting reflections here on staff-student dynamics, what surprises you about this dialogue?

What expectations do you have about student behaviour and/or engagement and how do you manage those in the classroom setting?

There is explicit reference here to the unease of a colleague when a student talks about racism - why do you think the teacher would have responded in this way? What message does that send out to the students and what would you do differently?



<http://arcproject.uk/common-space-view.html>

Narrative 2: Unravelling Groupwork

Li-Mei

Like, why were they arguing with a bunch of students? We were clearly actually engaged in the learning if we were talking about that kind of stuff.

Kacper

Soft mocking laugh.

And suddenly they wonder why half of us don't come to class, or generally hate talking to staff at any stage.

Li-Mei

So yeah, that's probably why I didn't properly ask either of them our points yesterday.

Sorry about that Sara, I know you wanted to hear what they'd say about our questions for outcome 5 as well.

Sara

Oh no no, don't worry dear. I can only imagine how difficult it must be when it comes to this sort of thing – of course I don't have the personal ties to the topics we're learning about the same way you two do, but it must be hard, and I've been around these spaces for longer than you two.

Li-Mei

...thanks for that, seriously. It's so annoying when we end up ranting about this stuff and older people jump on us for "disrespect" or whatever, when the whole point is that we want to be respectful but we can't when there's all this... wrong info going about.

It feels like there are a lot of assumptions going on here, both from the students' perspectives but also in the way they describe the staff responses.

What ideas do you have about how we can:

Demonstrate 'respect', both as staff members and as students?

Convince our students that we care (or do we?)

Sara

Gentle laugh.

Hey, are you calling me old?

Li-Mei

Smiling jokingly.

You know what I mean!

Sara

Of course, only joking.



<http://arcproject.uk/common-space-view.html>

Narrative 2: Unravelling Groupwork

Kacper

Yeah, what she said, it gets really bad when we're discussing stuff about Europe or whatever and I have to hold myself back from jumping in with all the other stuff that I know from lived experience because there's never any space for it.

Like, even when it's done correctly, quote unquote, it's still like we're running through a checklist and there's never time to actually interact with the learning to add in the extra bits that we could talk about.

Li-Mei

Mhm! It's not like we can just up and ask them to change the pacing or content of the classes either because I bet we'll just get the same response as we always have done.

Sara

Oh? What happened when you tried before? I'm very curious, surely it must've been heard somewhere if you complained?

Li-Mei

Grim chuckle.

You'd hope that, but nope. We just various replies of "We value your feedback but please understand it's hard to change an established curriculum." Or "Your experiences are valid and we're listening but they're too unique to be discussed."

Load of bs if you ask me, younger me was so pissed off and just lost all the fire after that.

Kacper

Yep, that's how it went down.

There is an important link established here between the curriculum and student agency, their sense of (not) being heard and their experiences (not) valued.

What do you do already in your context to try and make this link explicit? Is there anything you could be doing differently?



<http://arcproject.uk/staffroom-view.html>

Narrative 3: Intercultural Encounters

This narrative features conversations in a staff room space between several academic staff, with intermittent prompts for introspective thinking. Use the URL above to view the interactive web page for this narrative, or read through the full script below.

Characters (Left to Right)

Dr. Aaron Pearson

Dr. Hana Lane

Prof. Mary Cooke

Dr. Luke Simpson



Setting

Meeting room on university campus, doors are closed and the screen has been switched off. There are a lot of empty spaces around the table. Most of the staff look tired and harassed at mid-point in the semester, always an exhausting time.



Storyline

A group of staff have just come out of a staff-student feedback session, formal meeting which take place once a semester. They are now having an informal discussion exploring some of their feelings and frustrations about the students and the changing nature of higher education more broadly.



<http://arcproject.uk/staffroom-view.html>

Narrative 3: Intercultural Encounters

Dr Aaron Pearson

..Yeah, I know that meeting felt a bit useless because all they were talking about was the fact that class was cancelled at the last minute, and then all that chat about the parking and the cost of getting here, but honestly that really riled me.

I mean come on. These people are adults. I'm not the only one thinking that they chose to come to university, so they should start behaving like they actually want to be here - right?

Dr Hana Lane

I mean of course, I don't think that's an unpopular opinion-

Dr Aaron Pearson

Thank you! They know they're here to learn, but apparently being irked by this behaviour is radical to some people...

How does this opening resonate with you?

Dr Aaron Pearson

And year after year it just gets worse - did you know I had this complaint last week from a student who told me that she felt "disrespected" as I had asked her to give us an example of what it's like in China?

Prof Mary Cooke

Uncomfortably looking around.

...I'm sure there must've been a reason for that, though, surely?

Dr Aaron Pearson

I mean, it turned out this student was not from China, but she was actually Scottish but her parents are from South Korea. She seemed pretty ticked off so I'm just hoping I don't get an actual formal complaint about it.

But see, that's what they told us to do in that daft staff development workshop the other week, suggesting we invite global perspectives and such into our classroom. Use our international students as resources and the like.

But apparently there's just no pleasing some people I guess.

Dr Hana Lane

Aaron, please don't think I'm looking to argue with you about this, but I do have to say as someone who's most definitely been on the other side of that before – my mother is Japanese and is frequently mistaken as being Chinese – I think there's quite a lot going on there that shouldn't just be written off as nitpicking students.

Dr Aaron Pearson

Grumbling.

Oh great, here we go...



<http://arcproject.uk/staffroom-view.html>

Narrative 3: Intercultural Encounters

Dr Hana Lane

No, seriously, Aaron.

Again, I'm not looking to argue with you here, but from what you've told us, the entire incident comes across at best as rather unprofessional and at worst very offensive.

While it is great that Hana can call out her colleague here, what do you feel about his assumptions and inability to see that he has been racist?

What do you think about Hana having to share her personal story to make her point?

Dr Hana Lane

Saying this as a friend and as a colleague, what I've learned is that it's all too easy to accidentally offend students these days, and it's all too hard to figure out what's genuinely an issue and what's just particular people looking to feel victimized.

Dr Aaron Pearson

Oh look, something we agree on at least!

Dr Hana Lane

Sharp look.

Don't mistake me as approving how you're talking about it though...

I just think new best practice is to go in, remain safely distanced, deliver your content and get out.

In fact I actually got pulled up by a student the other week for addressing the class as "guys", and then another student jokingly-

Or at least, I think it was jokingly...

Anyways, another student then accused me of being "ableist".

I don't even know what that means in that context-

Dr Aaron Pearson

-Precisely my point!

Dr Hana Lane

How are we supposed to know which way to turn when every definition changes every other day?!

How does this part make you feel in terms of what it says about staff perspectives on inclusion?

There are some interesting reflections on academic freedom here, a very contentious topic. What do you make of Hana's approach to teaching?

Prof Mary Cooke

Oh come on, you two.



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Narrative 3: Intercultural Encounters

Prof Mary Cooke

I hear what you're both saying but recently, I accompanied a group of international students to that new exhibition at the Museum.

And even though it made me feel somewhat uncomfortable to realize, I have to say, some of their observations have made me feel a little, hmm, I don't know... outdated?

Dr Aaron Pearson

I fail to see how that relates to what we're talking about though-

Dr Hana Lane

Cutting him off.

-but what do you mean by that? That's at least some constructive insight I feel.

Prof Mary Cooke

They were talking about the way the exhibits portrayed British history, and about how their history of the same event in India had been taught very differently.

It made me think that the way our culture and our country represent our history is often romanticised, and even idealised.

What do you think about Mary's realisation that our university culture and practices are in fact colonial and that our students can enlighten us?

Prof Mary Cooke

In fact, do you know I learned that the reason we throw our caps in the air at graduation comes from mens' outrage at women being allowed to attend university?

It's because they actually threw their caps in the air in protest!

It's that sort of knowledge that I really should've known, being an academic, and yet here I am learning in moments like this from my students.

Dr Hana Lane

Wow, really? That's such an interesting piece of information about something that everyone knows as a cornerstone of most students' educational experiences, but I didn't even know where it came from...

Dr Aaron Pearson

Begrudgingly.

Alright, I will readily say that is an intriguing fact worth discussing.

Prof Mary Cooke

It's more than that though, isn't it?

Seeing our world through the lens of these students got me thinking... the world is changing, that's for sure.

We spend so much of our time teaching what we've always taught – or at least I do – and maybe we're missing something.



<http://arcproject.uk/staffroom-view.html>

Narrative 3: Intercultural Encounters

What, if anything, are you learning from this dialogue about our own approaches to teaching and how we listen to our students?

What do you make of Aaron Pearson's response to his colleague's insights?

Prof Mary Cooke

So all in all, I will say good on you, Aaron, for trying to bring in another perspective. Shame it didn't work this time but surely it won't come to a formal complaint?

Dr Luke Simpson

Hurriedly.

Ha! Yet more student dissatisfaction!

Dr Hana Lane

Uncomfortable laughter between the others.

Did you have an opinion to add here Luke?

Dr Luke Simpson

I think I hear what you're saying, Hana Lane. Things are indeed changing.

I even often feel very guilty when I look at those international students who must be going through a massive culture shift while still expected to keep up with the usual student workload.

Dr Hana Lane

Oh definitely, it's easy to forget to be especially empathetic when it comes to minor things we take as a given simply because it's our more familiar culture-

Dr Luke Simpson

-Mhm! So, I had heard about this activity that a colleague of mine has done at the University of X and I thought I would try it.

They introduced it as a way of welcoming all the different voices into the classroom at the beginning, and to try and acknowledge the diversity of perspectives and experiences in the room.

That's how they described it at least.

So, it was the first session of the module meeting and-

Dr Aaron Pearson

Hang on, are you talking about potentially changing our approach?

I have a massive grant bid deadline and while don't get me wrong, I can see that clearly this sort of thing is worth talking about, I really don't want to do that just now-

Prof Mary Cooke

Placating but clearly frustrated.

But if not now, then when?



<http://arcproject.uk/staffroom-view.html>

Narrative 3: Intercultural Encounters

Prof Mary Cooke

There's always going to be a project bid in the waiting line, or some initiative in the wings, or some significant faculty rearrangement going on.

Isn't this exactly why we're in these situations in the first place?

Dr Hana Lane

Oh I agree, putting it like that really shows how we prioritise different aspects of development at our university compared to all the rest...

And now it just feels like having said this, have we really been listening to our student voices at all?

How much have we changed that we can claim credit for, and how much change hasn't happened because of our own – unintended – internal priorities?

Dr Aaron Pearson

Hey now, I know I probably am the most, ahem, uninformed, of everyone in our little circle at the moment, but that seems a little harsh, I think.

We've 180'd half a dozen modules over the last few years, axed a number of others, and achieved a whole bunch of diversity statistics that the marketing department won't stop crowing about.

Defensively.

I think it's hardly fair to frame it that way when I, and all of you as my hard-working colleagues, have had to keep up with the changing world and present a seemingly impartial front while we teach as well.

Prof Mary Cooke

But isn't that just it?

Our colleagues and fellow academics across many institutions should be able to recognise the intent of our words without feeling, I don't know... attacked?

I should like to think you and I and everyone know what I meant, as well as what Hana intended.

Dr Aaron Pearson

Well, I think I do, all I'm saying is that I don't know how popular any of us would be if we were to start touting the horns of change when it could easily sound like the drums of war against academia as it stands – if you catch the gist of my metaphor.

Dr Hana Lane

Quietly.

But it shouldn't matter about how "unpopular" a stance is.

It should be about what's best, and what's right.

Prof Mary Cooke

Quietly.

As well as what's needed, both for the academic world, and for the students...

How would you describe the overall tone and language here?

Is there anything in this dialogue that makes you feel uncomfortable? If so, why?

How do you feel about the changing landscape of higher education (is it?)