Abstract

Dr Michael Lent and Paul Stewart

Building critical pedagogies into the neoliberal institution

Working with critical pedagogical frameworks at HEIs is not radical in itself but implementing pedagogical practices that enable and empower the student peers to think wider of the world and their role in it is. At Teesside University we are looking to move away from treating students as consumers’ of knowledge and towards a community of learners. myself and Dr Lent are working on integrating critical frameworks into the art school at Teesside University through both Lent’s research and my current PhD by practice research at the university. Lent is my current supervisor and collaboratively we have found avenues and techniques to integrate our research methodologies to become integral to both our research and our teaching practice. It is a fine line between where the artist ends and the teacher begins in a HE context and from this we have embraced an environment that is peer lead and focuses on building a community of learners rather than individuals of learning. This leads us to our current dilemma, what is an appropriate methodology for practice based research, it is a rhetorical question and any answer would be subjective and too relativist but for us it is the same as in our art practice, participatory ethnographers, as teachers, artists and researchers we are present observers in a community of researchers aka the students. We will look to present the implementation of a core restructure of the Level five BA Fine Art developing a core integrated theme around locating, building and acknowledging communities with a move away from making work for the sake of assessment and towards understanding how they function as individuals in the world. The structure will be implemented for the 2016-17 academic year.

Through their exhibition research and related activities students put into practice many of the ideas, skills and experiences in order to more actively create and realise the beginning of these ideas in relation to the larger community through art. They then take this new found understanding to locate themselves as artists in a more integrated practice. We want the pedagogy to focus on building and facilitating a community of learners to negotiate arts shared space and significance in the world. From this students begin to pose questions on how a community of learners are shaped by themselves their peers, lecturers and staff, as well as by all of our perceptions.