

**Research Spotlight: Social justice and empowerment of undergraduates from predominantly disadvantaged backgrounds – with reference to the APP (Access & Participation Plan)**



**Jayne Hemmins**

Senior Lecturer in Textiles & Surface Design  
The Northern School of Art



Perspectives in Art and Design



## Recommended citation:

Hemmins, J. (2023) Research Spotlight: Social justice and empowerment of undergraduates from predominantly disadvantaged backgrounds – with reference to the APP (Access & Participation Plan). Edition 5. The Northern School of Art Research & Scholarly Activity Conference. July 2023

I CANT do it I am NOT good enough

shouldn't be here.

I am not the same as everyone else.

If I fail, I prove myself right - Internalised  
maybe if I think I will fail, I won't let myself

I don't remember a certain age that it stopped. It just seemed to fade  
and I kept it all hidden from other people.

At uni when feedback was more intense  
critical lost confidence, took things too  
feedback can't

# Jayne Hemmins EdD Research

---



---

My Research – Social justice and empowerment of undergraduates from predominantly disadvantaged backgrounds – with reference to the APP (Access & Participation Plan)

**Potential title... ‘Can creativity be a disruption to neoliberalised education models in empowering art & design undergraduates’ ?**





# Rationale

---

**Access & Participation Data highlights that the majority of the School's students are from non-traditional HE backgrounds...**

The majority of the school's population is categorised as underrepresented, of which 79.6% have two of more intersections of disadvantage



Frequently used indicators of social class, namely occupation and educational qualifications, tell only half the story of class experiences in education. They are more completely understood in terms of confidence and entitlement in relation to education, the amount of knowledge and information about the school system that families have, the social networks that families have access to, wealth or the lack of it; but also whether you come to school with a family history of educational success and recognition, or with a sense that education is not something you and your family are good at.

(Reay (2017, p.179-180)

# Context – Neoliberalism as a backdrop

Cause and effect

National Curriculum (less emphasis on the arts)

League tables

Marketisation of education

Teaching to the test

Inspections

Quantifiable processes

Marks rather than experiences as focus

---

Less emphasis on creative thinking, critical thinking, independent/experimental learning



## How?

Action/participatory research with me working alongside (creatively)....

---

Democratic/collaborative/non-hierarchical approaches

## Why?

Aiming to disrupt neoliberal education models

Empowering students as researchers and co-creators of knowledge



---

*'an unrestrictive creative education system is the life-support machine for a creative and innovative society'* Maisuria (2005, p. 150)

---

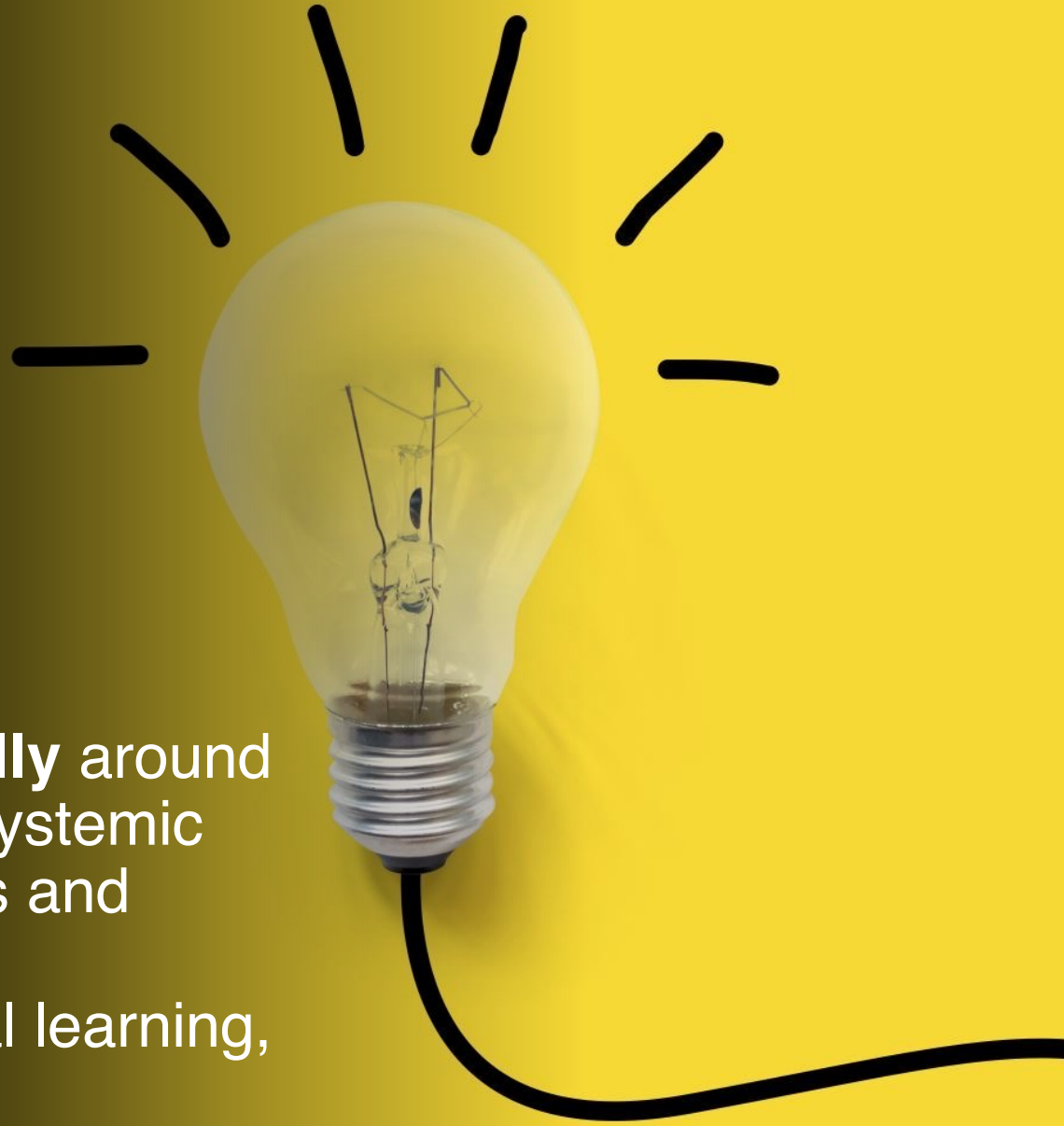
## Research proposal

Initial call out for volunteers – September 2024?

---

Potentially one afternoon per week?  
'The Wednesday Afternoon Club'

Sessions designed and planned **democratically** around exploring barriers to learning – personal and systemic (raising awareness of neoliberalist approaches and impact), creative thinking, critical thinking, empowerment, skills development, experiential learning, confidence and self-esteem development....





---

## Research methods

---

- Field work/journaling
- Observations
- Creative responses/making art alongside
- Art works
- Possibly unstructured interviews?

# Presentation of project

---

**There is no one set of criteria for judging the artistic quality of a work of arts-based research just as there is no one paradigm for the beauty of a work of art - for some, the beauty of a work of art is in the aesthetics of its forms and the mastery of its techniques; for others, it is in the authenticity and expressiveness of voice; and for still others, in the incisiveness of its social critique**  
**(Rolling, 2008)**



# Impact

---

Working with students in a participatory way... potential impact upon curriculum, long term





## The Metaphor of Bet Lynch

### ...Positionality

---

The researcher has to reflect on how their values, experiences and social identity impact the research process. There must be a sense of how the research process has affected and changed the researcher (Swinton (2017, p. 14)



# References

---

Maisuria, A. (2014) *The Neo-liberalisation Policy Agenda and Its Consequences for Education in England: a focus on resistance now and possibilities for the future*. *Policy Futures in Education*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp.286-296.

Reay, D. (2017) *Miseducation: Inequality, education, and the working classes*. Bristol. Policy Press.

Rolling, J. H. (2006). *Who is at the city gates? A surreptitious approach to curriculum-making in art education*. *Art Education*, 59(6), 40-46.

Swinton, V. (2017) *Culture, spirituality, reflexivity, and funeral rituals*. *Thresholds*, (Summer Edition). BACP .

---



**PAD**

Perspectives in Art and Design