Breaking Ranks: forging partnership across boundaries of discipline and status

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Taking Race Live 2014-15
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Depts of Drama and Sociology
The aim is to make social research responsive to social life, to bring it alive.

Les Back, TRL symposium, March 17th

Aims:

• Show how inventive partnerships can generate engagement across disciplines

• Show how cultural learning can engage students, including those from BME groups, through generating new perspectives on the relevance and application of their studies in the wider world

• Encourage a culture of active, autonomous and creative collaboration between students, opening their minds to the value of cross-disciplinary research and practice in their future studies and in the workplace.
Project Activities

• **Oct:** National Portrait Gallery *Race and Ethnicity Tour*

• **Nov:** Black Cultural Archives & *Reimagining Black Women* exhibition

• **Nov:** Social Event: *Orange is the New Black*

• **Dec-Jan:** Committee Formed

• **Feb:** Clint Dyer Talk & Theatre Trip: *Multitudes @ Tricycle*

• **March 3rd:** Interim Event: *What’s Your Story @ Fighting Cocks*

• **March 17th:** Symposium: *Stories of Race, Faith & Culture*

• **June 26th:** Kingston Connections Festival of Stories: *Everyday Tales of Race and Ethnicity: an interdisciplinary performance of story*
Partnership Values

Authenticity
Inclusivity
Reciprocity
Empowerment
Trust
Responsibility
Challenge
Community

- Challenge
- Community

+ Plurality
+ Courage
+ Honesty

Strategic Enhancement Programme:
Engaged Student Learning
Inclusivity

Partnership embraces the different talents, perspectives and experiences that all parties bring, and there are no barriers (structural or cultural) that prevent potential partners getting involved.

**Barriers**

- Institutional systems
- Practical
- Disciplinary languages
- Racial/Cultural
- Emotional
“Trust in a multi-cultural task group is difficult to develop. Research indicates that group members tend to adhere to other group members of their own culture...”


3 BARRIERS TO CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION: Misperception, Misinterpretation, Misevaluation

Courage:

“...the usually negative emotions that people can experience when encountering individual members of outgroups, triggered by...an anxiety-toned desire to make the interaction go smoothly and not to give offense.”

Smith and Mackie (2010), Intergroup Emotions
Reciprocity
All parties have an interest in, and stand to benefit from working and/or learning in partnership

Authenticity
The rationale for all parties to invest in partnership is meaningful and credible
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Empowerment

Power is distributed appropriately and ways of working and learning promote healthy power dynamics

- Trust and courage
- Value
- Money
- Territory
- Belonging
- Safe-space

We’d all worked so hard...and just seeing everyone’s faces, like, so engaged...oh, it was just wonderful...that sense of achievement is just really, really powerful.
Value, Responsibility

I’ve got a lot more confidence and I believe in my ideas a lot more...that’s very empowering. ...it’s been a project that’s been an idea, then a work in progress, then it’s succeeded, so now I take on the approach of my life like that...

To get a lot of responsibility with it was really great. Definitely got to do a lot more than I first imagined.
Reciprocity Revisited

Everyday Tales of Race and Ethnicity @
Kingston Connections Festival of Stories

Working with sociology students was fun...they had a vision for their research, but as a drama student I was able to contribute...to how it should be performed. Reading their work makes you think and...this made me want to perform even more and enlighten the audience.

It...gave [drama students] the opportunity to share our creative knowledge with the sociology students whilst they educated us on the topic of race...both parties left the process having learnt more about the topic, the steps to putting a performance together and also about themselves as a creator.
I... felt more recognised because in class when black issues are raised it feels like everyone turns and looks at the black student to comment and then move on... so this did give me a sense of belonging, not only in drama but generally.

[the lectures on whiteness] were really interesting... They sort of gave me that gateway to actually come into the whole sort of race and ethnicity sort of thing.... I was, like... ok, I can take part in this and I will take part in this.
Where do we go from here?

• Taking Race Live 2 – Sociology and Music
• Performing Dialogues of Race and Culture – Drama, then School of Performance and Screen Studies
• Curriculum Changes

Changing Cultures: Partnership
Bibliography

• HEA (2014), Framework for Partnership in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. www.heacademy.ac.uk

Members of the Taking Race Live Project Team:
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