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# Ethics as Practice Activity

## Pathways, Collections, Blocks

## Tasks

## **Pathways, Collections, Blocks**

In this activity, you will use formal ethics questions as design tools to help develop, explore and play with the emerging elements of your research projects.



## **Pathways**

In this section, you will explore the ethical themes underlying the questions.

## MA Ethics Enquiry Form

<https://moodle.arts.ac.uk/mod/folder/view.php?id=1138218>

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### MA Academic Practice in Art, Design and Communication

#### Major Project Ethical Enquiry Form

Participant name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor name: Catherine Smith / John O'Reilly (delete as appropriate)



#### 1. Who will be providing you with information to help you answer your question?

Delete as appropriate:

- Students at UAL
- Staff at UAL
- Students at another institution (please specify institution):
- Staff at another institution (please specify institution):

#### 2. How will you get informed consent from these participants?

Even if you only intend to collect and use information directly from your students' normal activities (e.g. their coursework), you will still need to have their consent for you to use this information for the purpose of your enquiry. They should have the right to opt out of their data being used, while still being able to take part in the activity. Your participants also have a right to *anonymity*. This doesn't mean you can't use video, images etc – it just means participants need to have given their consent for images or footage of themselves to be used in this way.

You might use a consent form that also provides information about your enquiry; however you should consider how the use of such a form might influence the outcomes of the activity you have in mind. You may decide that verbal consent, or retrospective consent, is more appropriate. If you are ONLY collecting data through surveys, you can obtain informed consent through the survey itself (using a checkbox on the survey with a link to the supporting information).

Whatever method you use, participants must be able to *access information* about the study so they know what they are consenting to, and they should be *allowed to withdraw their consent* if they change their mind. There are examples of Participant Information and Participant Consent Forms on Moodle for your reference.

#### 3. What will you be asking participants to do?

For example:

- Consent to their contributions to [activity x] being used for the purposes of this study
- Complete a survey about their experience of [x] (include a link to the survey if possible)
- Take part in a focus group on [x] (attach a plan/structure for the focus group)
- Respond to an e-mail asking three questions about [x] (state the questions)

The areas covered on a form like this in part originate in historical areas of misconduct. (Kara, 2015, p.35) These forms are a necessity and no one wants bad things to happen. However, in their structure and content it can sometimes seem that they are actually more about protecting institutions rather than people (Kara, 2015, p.37) and can even actively hinder the carrying out of ethical research. (Kara, 2015, p.35)

However, formal question are just steps on a **pathway** towards a more all-encompassing and useful ethical approach. They can be a powerful generative, speculative and imaginative tool.

You could translate our ethics form into the following pathways:

**Pathway 1: Authorship and Value**

**Pathway 2: Learning, Knowing and Communicating**

**Pathway 3: Participant Experience**

**Pathway 4: Care**

- 1. Select the pathway that seems most interesting or relevant and make notes on the associated questions.**
- 2. Discuss in pairs.**

## **Collections**

In this section, you will extend your thinking into the visual and sensory.

**3. With the notes you have just been making fresh in your mind, select a sight, a sound and a smell/touch that - seems like, feels like or reminds you of - your developing project ideas.**

Your selection should be:

- Instinctual and intuitive
- Feel true for you

It doesn't need to be:

- logical or explainable, especially to anyone else
- laboured over or take too long

It might respond or relate:

- to your pathway thoughts
- your developing project ideas more generally

This task draws on ideas of reflection-in-action, reflecting-in-action and knowing-in-action. (Schon, 1994, pp. 49 – 59)



**4. Share in your pairs.**

## **Building Blocks**

In this section, you will make your collections into potential building blocks for your project by connecting them back to your original ethical themes.

**5. Consider your collection alongside the Pathway notes. How could the material from your collection impact or inform that thinking? Answer this question through written or visual notes.**

**Possible starting questions:**

- Pathway 1: Authorship and Value  
**How can the visual/sensory relate to value and credit?**
- Pathway 2: Learning, Knowing and Communicating  
**How can the visual/sensory aid learning and communication?**
- Pathway 3: Participant Experience  
**How can the visual/sensory shape experience?**
- Pathway 4: Care  
**How can the visual/sensory facilitate practices of care?**

Understanding the sensory as ethical terrain is something explored in Sarah Pink's *Doing Sensory Ethnography*. (2009)

### **Reference List:**

Kara, H (2015) *Creative Research Methods in the Social Sciences: A Practical Guide*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Schon, D. A. (1994) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. London: Routledge.

Pink, S. (2009) *Doing Sensory Ethnography*. 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. edn. London: Sage Publications.