

**Ethical Action Plan (500-750 words)\***

This document is a chance for you to **begin shaping your project** while thinking through its ethical considerations, implications, and responsibilities. We know this might feel early in your action research journey, but this short plan is here to help pin down your ideas and work-in-progress.

**Use whatever writing format that suits you** - lists, bullet points, statements or paragraphs - and follow the suggested links stated alongside some of the questions for guidance.

**A good starting point** is the [BERA Guidelines for Educational Research, fifth edition \(2024\)](#) alongside the [‘Ethics Files and Resources’](#) on Moodle.

**When you’re ready**, email your draft to your allocated tutor **48 hours in advance of you first group tutorial** in the week commencing **6 October 2025**, so it can help guide the focus of discussions and support your project development.

**Name:** Christin Yu

**Tutor:** Millika Kanyal

**Date:** 23 September 2025

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| <p><b>1. What is the working title of your project?</b> Also write a few sentences about the focus of your project.</p> <p><b>Brave Spaces and Moderating Free Speech:</b><br/>This project will review practices in the classroom for seminar-based teaching regarding free speech and non-violent communication techniques. I ask ‘can tears be encouraged or even permissible in the classroom?’ as a foundation to think about free speech, moderating difficult discussions and reducing emotional harm in conversation. We are living in fraught times, where debates between social justice and free speech have become seemingly polarised positions of the political spectrum. Cancel culture increasingly discourages conversations that may potentially harm historically marginalised students, but what is at stake? This research aims to explore how contemporary political polarisations shape seminar spaces today. By attending and analysing UAL’s offered Non-Violent Communication course and Brave Space training, I will evaluate and report on practices in the classroom, offering an intervention in the form of collaborative knowledge production of pedagogical strategies and possible training.</p> |
| <p><b>2. What sources will you read or reference?</b> Share 5 to 10.</p> <p>Arao, B. and Clemens, K. (2013) ‘From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces: A New Way to Frame Dialogue Around Diversity and Social Justice’, in <i>The Art of Effective Facilitations</i>, ed. Landreman, L.M. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, pp. 135-150.</p> <p>Bacevic, J. (2023) ‘No Such Thing as Free Speech? Performativity, Free Speech, and Academic Freedom in the UK’, <i>Law and Critique</i> 36, pp. 1-19.</p> <p>Hume, A. and Young-Loveridge, J. (2011) ‘Using professional colleagues as interviewers in action research: Possibilities and pitfalls’, <i>Waikato Journal of Education</i> 16:3, pp. 111-124.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

Koopman, S. and Seliga, L. (2021) 'Teaching peace by using nonviolent communication for difficult conversations in the college classroom', *Peace and Conflict Studies* 27:3, pp. 1-29.

Martinez-Cola, M w English, R., Min, J, Peraza J, Tambah, J, Yebuah, C. (2018) 'When Pedagogy Is Painful: Teaching in Tumultuous Times', *Teaching Sociology* 46:2, pp. 97-111.

Malcolm, F. (2021) 'Silencing and freedom of speech in UK higher education', *British Educational Research Journal* 47:3, pp. 520-538.

OR Books (2025) *Norman Finkelstein in Conversation with Cornel West and Nadine Strossen on Free Speech and Gaza*. 7 August. <https://www.normanfinkelstein.com/norman-finkelstein-in-conversation-with-cornel-west-and-nadine-strossen-free-speech-and-gaza/> (Accessed: 23 Sept 2025).

Palfrey, J. (2017) *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces: Diversity and Free Expression in Education*. Cambridge, MA and London, UK: The MIT Press.

Verduzco-Baker, L. (2018) 'Modified Brave Spaces: Calling in Brave Instructors', *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 4:4, pp. 585-592.

**3. What action(s) are you planning to take, and are they realistic in the time you have (Sept-Dec)?**

I will interview my colleagues recruited via a purposeful sampling method and an open call for participants for 30-60 minutes before mid-October to gather data regarding seminar issues, needs within training, shifting discussion structures, pedagogical beliefs about free speech, power dynamics in the classroom, and other questions regarding practices within the classroom.

There will be multiple interviews conducted throughout the semester to evaluating shifting teaching practices. I will also attend UAL's Non-Violent Communication teacher training, and potentially use the training in intervention in my own classroom. Otherwise, I will aim to deliver training on Brave Spaces, and reflect upon the two frameworks as a research report and presentation.

**4. Who will be involved, and in what way? (e.g. colleagues, students, local community...). Note, if any of your participants will be under the age years of 18yrs, please seek further advice from your tutor.**

Colleagues will be recruited through purposeful sampling as well as an open call for participants to staff at [UAL who teach seminar-based classes](#). Seminars are discursive, offering spaces for students to converse and unpack ideas and debates occur. In my own experiences, and listening to fellow colleagues, these are the spaces that prompt and potentially ignite difficult conversations.

[There will be semi-structured interviews that will take between 30-60 minutes](#) throughout the year. Depending on the timeline and logistics of implementing the Brave Space training, I may also reflect upon the interventions of my classroom using autoethnography.

**5. What are the health & safety concerns, and how will you prepare for them?**

- <https://canvas.arts.ac.uk/sites/explore/SitePage/42587/health-and-safety-hub>
- <https://canvas.arts.ac.uk/sites/explore/SitePage/45761/health-and-safety-policies-and-standards>

The interviews will be conducted either online or in-person at CSM. An intervention will take place as a reflection and report on implementing policies for Non-Violent Communication and/or Brave Space frameworks.

**Commented [MK1]:** You could write a rationale for aiming to focus on seminar based sessions, for example, student are more like to have open discussions, etc

**Commented [MK2]:** Again, due to the sensitivity of the topic, worth spending some time framing the questions right.

Both the in-person practices will follow the CSM safety, health and wellbeing policy and protocols, colleagues will have undergone the UAL safety training as part of their staff training. I will use care and empathy according to decolonial theories and non-violent communication in the interviews.

Commented [MK3]: Please see my comment above re the wording of the questions etc

**6. How will you manage and protect any physical and / or digital data you collect, including the data of people involved?**

- o <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024-online#consent>
- o <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024-online#privacy-data-storage>

Participants will be recruited via a purposeful sampling method, and an open call. The participation will be voluntary, and I will be obtaining voluntary informed consent forms from the participants, making accommodation for any specificities requested by the participants. They have the option to withdraw consent from the study for any reason and at any time. The names of the participants will all my anonymised.

The participants will also be informed of the study through a participant information sheet, which will include information on why their participation is desired, what they will be asked to do, and what will happen to the data they provide.

The data provided will be stored according to GDPR regulations and in accordance to the UK Data Protection Act to protect personal data: including the use of secure computer networks; ensuring that hard copy data are stored under lock and key on secure premises; digitising resources and destroying the originals; the use of password protection and/or data encryption for electronic data; using courier or secure electronic transfer when moving data; and ensuring that any third-party users of data agree to an appropriate data-sharing agreement. I am aware that automated transcription may compromise confidentiality, therefore, I will transcribe any recorded interviews.

**7. How will you take ethics into account in your project for participants and / or yourself?**

- o <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024-online#responsibilities-participants>
- o <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024-online#responsibilities-sponsors>
- o <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-fifth-edition-2024-online#responsibilities-wellbeing>
- o See [Emotionally Demanding Research](#) PDF on Moodle

The participants will be informed of the project through a participant information sheet and I will obtain voluntary consent. Any names will be anonymised in any research outputs. The participants will also have the opportunity to withdraw consent for any reason at any time throughout the process.

The research will abide by BERA ethics of respect for all persons, including myself. The project will present feedback from the findings with the participants, sharing a link to my PgCert blog links, offering opportunities to co-collaborate and develop these practices in the future, and provide copies of any publications in the future.

\* The form itself is around 300 words, so with your additions the total length will come to a maximum of about 1,050 words.