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BBC Outreach



## Keeping it Real? A Critical Race and Music and Video Research Project

MPAS, Dock 10, BBC, Media City  
November 20<sup>th</sup>, 11am – 12pm

*Using music and video, Keeping it Real? explores young people's attitudes towards the representation of BAME communities in the media and popular culture and how this representation shapes wider attitudes towards crime.*

Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) in partnership with BBC Outreach hosted *Keeping it Real?* an event in Being Human 2015, the UK's only national festival of the humanities. This involved working with young people from the community organisations CLR James Community Trust and Making Education a Priority (MEaP), members from the BBC Philharmonic and wider staff from the BBC. Young people were mentored by BBC staff and members from the CLR James Community Action Trust to compose a musical track (grime/hip hop/drum'n'bass fusion) with members of the BBC Philharmonic that explored their perceptions of BAME youth cultural representation. The young people were also mentored in filming and photography to make a documentary of the project to be shown alongside the performance at the final event. The project consisted of creative sessions that were held on campus at MMU on October 27<sup>th</sup>, November 5<sup>th</sup> and November 11<sup>th</sup> and a performance at the BBC, Media City on November 20<sup>th</sup>. The event was selected to be part of Being Human by the festival organisers, the School of Advanced Study, University of London, the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC), and the British Academy (BA) with support from the Wellcome Trust.

# The Research

## *Rationale*

We wanted to see if working creatively with music and video to discuss discursive issues around race, culture and representation would actually translate into measurable outcomes around perceptions of crime, offending behaviour and wellbeing.

## *The Intervention*

Through the provision of participatory activities that included creative writing, song and video workshops, over 5 three-hour sessions, participants were encouraged to make pieces of work that explored their views of race, youth and representation and the impact these issues had on their anti-social behaviour or view of anti-social behaviour. Participants were also informally interviewed during the creative sessions in order to background the work they had created.

Participants were split into two groups; "test group" and "control group". The test group took part in the music activity and used music to reflect on their offending behaviour or attitudes towards offending behaviour. The other group took part in a video making activity and only learned video making skills, with no critical reflection of the issues. We treated this group as the control group. The control group made a short video of the test group's creative processes. This meant that both groups were influenced by the music-led activity, to a certain degree. However, in order to distinguish between the results of both groups, the test group (music) will have specifically explored themes around offending behavior and race and cultural representation. The control group will only have learned about video and film techniques and their learning will not have been issues based.

## *The Participants*

The study population was a random sample of young people between the ages of 16 – 24yrs (n=20) from the Blackpool and Greater Manchester areas. The test group had n=10 members with n=1 participant who was an ex-offender. The control had n=10 participants with n=3 who were ex-offenders. We had a 75 per cent return rate of questionnaires, as five participants decided to leave after the first session.

All participants 16 – 17yrs were given consent forms for their carers/parents to sign before they participated in the study. This ensured that the parents/carers were informed of the exact nature of the research and that they were happy for their young people to participate.

## *Methodology*

The design was quasi-experimental (the young people self-selected the video or music groups upon application to participate) using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. We administered Crime-Pics II (Frude et al. 1994) to all the young people participating in the study before and after the intervention. The questionnaire was administered verbally on an individual basis and questions were rephrased in an age appropriate manner when necessary. Crime-Pics II generates five scales. Four are generated by attitudinal questions and the fifth explores a problem inventory. The scales are scored in such a way as to denote a greater 'deviant' or 'criminal' attitude with higher scores than lower scores.

## Scales

### General attitude (G)

Measures the offender's general attitude towards offending. A low score indicates that the individual believes that an offending lifestyle is not desirable

### Anticipation of future offending (A)

Measures the offender's anticipation of reoffending. A low score suggests that the individual does not anticipate reoffending

### Victim empathy (V)

Measures the offender's attitude towards his or her victims – whether they believe they have caused any harm. A low score indicates that the individual recognises their actions have an impact on victims, directly or indirectly i.e. higher victim empathy

### Evaluation of crime as worthwhile (E)

Measures the offender's evaluation of crime being worthwhile. A low score indicates that the individual perceives the cost of crime as being greater than its rewards

### Problem inventory (P)

This problem inventory measures the offender's perceptions of their current problems (e.g. money, relationships, housing, etc.). The higher the score, the greater the number and gravity of identified problems. However, caution should be taken when interpreting these results as an increase may also indicate better problem identification skills

We also used the 'Map of Me' graffiti chart. The graffiti chart was developed in 2005 in my work at HMPYOI Werrington. Interviewees were encouraged to give each quadrant of a four-box grid a name of an issue that was of most importance to them in the interview. The interviewees were then encouraged to write or draw sub-issues under the title of their quadrants that gave further explanation of their chosen issues. Finally, interviewees were asked if they could make links between the issues and sub issues by drawing connecting arrows that described the relationship. The end result was a map of the interviewees' current issues of importance in the session. The chart generates ranks according to the number of times an issue is mentioned pre- and post-intervention. The more times an issue has been mentioned post-intervention, the more important it is deemed to the participant, the higher it is ranked. The converse is also true. The 'Map of Me' graffiti chart was drawn by interviewees at the beginning and at the end of the intervention. The chart was also drawn after the completion of the Crime-Pics II questionnaire, which meant that if there were any significant issues arising from the questionnaire, especially from the problem inventory section, there was an opportunity to explore them further in the graffiti chart. The chart was administered on an individual basis.

## *Data Analysis*

The pilot study will use a mixed mode of data analysis. The quantitative data will be entered into the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and validated by an independent observer who will screen check each entry. Analysis will be carried out by using descriptive statistics and the Pearson's r-correlation (r) and Spearman's rank correlation (rho). My main measurement of pre- and postintervention correlation and significance will be Pearson's r-correlation with a measurement for p. However, I will also find it useful to test the distribution and statistical significance of the data with Spearman's rank, especially when working with my ranked results from 'Map of Me'.

## *Results*

We have not yet started data analysis. However, from the testimonials given by the young people in the Q+A session of the performance they said that the project had increased their feelings of well-being. One participant especially noted that the project had helped her to manage her anxiety attacks more effectively. Other participants noted how the group formed important social bonds that made the group feel like a "family". Although not directly attributable to the intervention, at the moment, previous studies (e.g. Clennon, 2013) indicate that increased well-being and feelings of social connection are likely to have a small but measurable positive impact on attitudes towards offending behaviour, especially shown by the V and A scores of the Crime-Pics II.

For more information about the results as we get them, including watching a BBC film about the project, please visit the MMU's Critical Race and Ethnicity Research Cluster at <https://critracemmu.wordpress.com/>

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