

Transcript

December 12, 2025, 1:35PM

□ **Claire Undy** started transcription



Claire Undy 0:07

OK, so I'm just turning on the transcription now and hopefully that is recording. Yes, I think so. OK. Amazing. All right. Well, thank you for taking part. And I am going to try and keep it as brief as possible. So as I've spoken to you about, I set up the Interchange Project as part of some research that I'm doing for my PgCert which is around student experiences of belonging within the course, and I'm hoping to use the observations I've made during the sessions and the information gathered from these interviews to make improvements to the programme for future years and your support's really valuable in this process.

I've turned on the transcript and recording settings and I've sent you a consent form, so please do check that you're happy with me using the information, you've given me and I won't use your name or image so your details will be anonymous. Do I have your consent to record our conversation?

Student G (name redacted) 1:06

Yeah, you have my consent.



Claire Undy 1:08

Thank you, Hayley. OK, so I've just got five questions. My first one is please, could you talk a little about why you chose to sign up for the Interchange Project?

Student G (name redacted) 1:20

So I was interested in doing the Interchange Project as a student who has been out of her year group for two years. So I did the Diploma of Professional Studies and then for financial reasons, I had to take a gap year. So that meant that coming back to University was a little bit of a jarring experience for me, and I wanted to make some friends and make some connections and just, you know, when you see people in in your course, you can smile at them. You can say hello and you kind of know

what their work is about. Especially as someone who's you know, been out of my own year group and also like to share my own skills as when I was out of my year group in in my in my gap year I was I was working as a special needs secondary school teacher, and with, you know, some of the new Year Ones being quite young, I was interested in my experience with them and if in the future I want to do like higher level teaching or working within the university setting.



Claire Undy 2:25

That's great. Thank you. How have you found the experience of working with the first year so far?

Student G (name redacted) 2:32

So it was fun. I think the way the session was set up was quite lively and quite engaging and gave me a leadership role in terms of going around and doing the treasure hunt. They seemed quite eager to ask me some questions and I think the session would have benefited from us sitting down in a group before we set off for the treasure hunt kind of doing like, oh, innate like names like where you're from like. Maybe something like maybe something you're interested in at the moment, like a favourite artist or some sort of little prompt there so that we could chat and get to know each other ever so briefly before we then went out and we were walking and talking. But yeah, it was fun, even with maybe some of the shyer students they seemed to be interested in talking to me. I feel like I did have to be, like, my more extrovert itself, which I don't mind doing every so often. Yeah, I found it valuable and a good way to break up my day as well. I feel like I was having... that day... I was having, maybe not one of my best days. So then to go and interact with, like, some fresh faces actually really helped me.



Claire Undy 3:44

Oh, that's great to hear. Thank you. And a really good point about doing some sort of getting to know you exercises first before we start the first session. I think that's something I'm definitely going to factor in next year. I think it was a bit unfortunate there was a lecture booked quite soon afterwards, so we ended up in a hurry. But yeah, I think that's something I'd like to incorporate for future one, so thank you.

I'm interested to hear whether you feel you belong at Camberwell and whether you think this might have changed at all over the time that you've been here.

Student G (name redacted) 4:06

No worries.

So I'll be very transparent in my first year I struggled with belonging due to a lot of personal factors including that I was commuting nearly 2 1/2 hours on bad days all the way from Slough into South London. So by the time that I'd got in at, you know, so like the early really the earliest I could get into university was 10.30. It felt like I was always in a rush, whether that was to lectures or seminars or workshops and always having to cut things short. Whether it was like social interactions or people going, like, oh, you know, we're going to go out after uni or like, oh, we're hanging out in studio. Do you want to stay? And it's like as soon as it hit 4:00, I needed to be out the door and off on my way. And then that was compounded by COVID as well. So we had a small year group as well as a lot of non attenders because of COVID and I think I put such a special emphasis going into my third year on trying to have that student experience that I feel like I missed out on in first and second year. So I think it's only through my perseverance because again, I do see that in our year group that maybe people aren't the most social, as kind of shown by the little Christmas party yesterday evening. Like, people don't really stick around and that's not at anyone's fault or pointing fingers at anyone. But then I went up to sculpture and it was really lively and there was a bigger year group and there's people from different courses. And it felt like there was, like, a bit of, like, different friendship groups, which feels a bit more like kind of the student experience that you're sort of promised. So it is there if you look for it, but it feels like I've had to be way more... I don't know, like, actually have it as a goal to feel belonging and be like, one- I'm paying for this experience and two- you know, I'm a final year student like I should be romping around like I own the place a little bit. You know, like there shouldn't be any barriers for me. And I feel like they're put up by myself. Like, I don't think it is the university per se that makes me feel like that. I think it is something in myself that- for a long time, I was like, oh, the kind of imposter syndrome. But right now I'm in, I'm in the modular building over at Wilson Rd. Like, you know, I've never been over here until a couple weeks ago. Just went into the little Christmas market for Illustration. Like doing all these little things where you know, you don't have to wait for, you know,

someone to tell you these things are on, like, going and finding them and that kind of fosters belonging for me.



Claire Undy 6:57

Great. That's really that's insightful. Thank you. So in your opinion, how do you think we could ensure that future first year students and maybe those who come from a background that's similar to yours, how do you think we could make sure they feel like they belong?

Student G (name redacted) 7:01

Alright.

I think it's it sounds really silly, but it's also operating within a year group that are maybe, I don't know, I think maybe this is a bit speculative, but some of them have a different maturity because of you know, like different things that have happened in the timeline, whether that's COVID, whether that's not doing an Art Foundation, which I'm seeing a lot more students coming fresh into uni like as 18 years old, whereas I had the Art Foundation to kind of get to grips with UAL and what it means to maybe be a bit of a fish out of water in terms of you know, you're looking at everyone and it's either, OK, you are an international student or you're a student of private school or sometimes boarding school background. And that's kind of the norm. So I, I was privileged enough to get used to that on my Foundation. I'm not really sure how a student from my background... the things that make them feel more comfortable about that... other than I don't know, maybe there needs to be... I don't know if this is a stretch, but kind of yeah, talks about class and privilege more embedded in some of the teaching potentially, I don't know. Like, just like little recognitions from- like I had it from [Year 2 Leader] in Year 2 where she talked about her background a little bit. She was like, 'I fully get where you're coming from. Like you're not a bad student because you have all of these other things going on'. Then obviously balancing like you know, it's important that people do show up and you are coming to university. It's not just like, OK, well, you've got these barriers so you know you can't, you know, get your work in and these different things.



Claire Undy 9:06

Yeah.

Student G (name redacted) 9:07

I guess that's more social times. More group crits I think really help early on in the year group. And then I guess probably the same perspective from the technicians and it's it's definitely not their fault or any individuals, but I think as someone who kind of struggles to ask for help, like making that really, really clear that it's like, OK, we're here to help you and nothing is a judgement and nothing is a oh, well, you don't know how to do that so. Well, you should really know how to do that.



Claire Undy 9:42

Yeah.

Student G (name redacted) 9:42

And again, a lot of a lot of it's internal. So I guess quite a lot of signposting of here is everything that you've got access to. It can be extremely overwhelming. But here's who you talk to for this. Here's who you talk to for this. And I like.. there's recently there's gone up like a big list of things in in the second year studio with the QR code on.



Claire Undy 10:02

Oh, I made that poster. Oh, I'm glad you like it.

Student G (name redacted) 10:21

Well, there you go. So more stuff like that where it's like maybe if someone is feeling super shy about going and asking their course because it doesn't feel right, OK? It feels embarrassing. As a photography student to be like, hey, where can I print really nice glossy photos of my work like that feels like something you should already really know. And yeah, there's, you know in in many ways... you should kind of be proactive and find that out yourself. But it's so easy to get, you know, as you don't do it once and then you see students around you being like, 'oh, well, I've used the darkroom for this' and 'I've gone to digital print for this'. And it's like, oh, no, I don't know how to do that.



Claire Undy 10:39

Yeah.

Student G (name redacted) 10:39

And it's like it's not too late essentially and I think that's what that big list kind of shows me that it's just like it's all here when you need it.



Claire Undy 10:49

Oh, good. Well, that's what... that was the intention for that. It really was to just try and make those things easier to find because I think it is quite difficult to navigate the system and everything has a different set of rules and a different person to talk to. So yeah, we were getting feedback from a few people that that was a bit of an off-putting barrier. And I guess if there's issues with confidence like you're mentioning of people not, you know... feeling a bit shy to approach somebody and say they don't know something that perhaps they feel they ought to know or something like that then.

Student G (name redacted) 11:13

Hmm.



Claire Undy 11:27

Yeah, hopefully that will make it easier. Great- there's some really interesting points. Thank you. I've just got one more question, which is, is there anything you would suggest that we could change about the mentoring project to make it a more valuable experience for third years?

Student G (name redacted) 11:29

Yeah. OK. I think maybe my response isn't too valuable because I was preoccupied with my dissertation for the most recent one, but **definitely encouraging first years to come and visit us**, I feel, but I don't know how you would do that in a way that's... I don't know. I think because first years are kind of in a separate studio. There's not really much reason for us to go over there, but it's nice. It's almost like they've got their own common room and then you almost move up to second and third year, which is, I don't know, I'm quite enjoying. That's like very like soft line in the sand.



Claire Undy 12:13

Yeah.

Yes.

Student G (name redacted) 12:26

But but for me, like what I'd need a first year for would be like, oh, hey, like, you know, I'm working on this piece. Do you want to come chill in the studio with me? Kind of like those more like social times or like, I guess we haven't quite got there yet. But during the grad show.



Claire Undy 12:40

Yeah.

Yeah.

Student G (name redacted) 12:45

It's silly things where it's like, oh, OK, can we have like three or four first years to come and help us paint the studio or, you know, three or four first years, even if it's just for a morning, like, oh, can you come and, like, watch my video piece or, you know, help lay out some photographs? It's like. They're kind of obliged in some sort of way, kind of in a sort of workshop-y way. Yeah. Again, it's that mentorship, like where it's like, OK, I expect 'insert student' to be here between to help me out with a little thing, whether it's stringing scenes together or all these, like, small kind of technical tasks where it's like we can sit and have a nice convo, like really relaxed environment as someone who's, you know, finishing first year into second. It's like...

[lost connection - interruption]

Student G (name redacted) 15:15

But yeah, so this is just obviously this is a fresh idea from like right now. But like imagine if it was like on the first year notice board it would be like oh slots with Hayley and it would be like, oh, I need someone from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM to help me do this and it would just be like a really chill like no hard obligation. But if it's like if someone's written their name down, it would be like, oh, so and so is going to come join me in the studio today or something like, especially for people who have more photographic practise in this like in the studio, it'd be like, oh, so and so is

going to join me in Wilson Rd for a little bit and for like I can imagine as his first year it'd be like especially to like post on Instagram and these sorts of things like oh, you know, I assisted insert third year and like now they've given me this little bit of advice or like, you know again it's like someone you can see.



Claire Undy 16:06

Yeah.

Student G (name redacted) 16:08

Around, you know, around campus. And she's like, oh, hi. Like. Oh, nice to see you, you know, and it breaks down those barriers a little bit.



Claire Undy 16:13

I think that... I think the first years would like that.

Student G (name redacted) 16:16

Yeah, and it gives its structure as well, like it's like, oh, you're going to help me with? Yeah. Photocopying this or you're going to help me with the framing images or like, it'll be a very, like, specific kind of this is what I need your hands for.



Claire Undy 16:17

Yeah.

Student G (name redacted) 16:33

Or it could just be like, oh, first years needed for informal crit, where it's like just completely fresh eyes. Like, look at my work and tell me what you think, and it could just, you know, it's like just based on like signups and, you know, people writing their names on things.



Claire Undy 16:50

I think, yeah, I think that's a really good suggestion. I think I could see the sort of artist assistant role being quite a useful one. Hopefully when we get a bit later in the year and we can pair the first years into the Degree show project we'll be able to kind of test that out a little bit and see how best to run that. I think they'll. Yeah, I could see both parties getting something out of that.

Student G (name redacted) 17:12

Yeah.

Yeah, I think it'd be quite fun.



Claire Undy 17:20

Great. That's a really good suggestion. Thank you. I'm aware I've taken up more of your time than I intended to. I'm sorry. I'll let you get back to the Letterpress. But thank you so much, **Hayley**. I will send you a transcript and just let me know if you think any of it's not quite right or you want to make any edits. Just let me know.

Student G (name redacted) 17:23

It's all good.

OK. Yeah, sure. I'm sitting here right now and I'm feeling like I don't need any edits. But thank you for the offer.



Claire Undy 17:46

OK. All right. Well, thank you and I will see you next time. Thank you.

Student G (name redacted) 17:50

No worries at all. Yeah, that's nice.

Oh yeah, have a lovely Christmas.



Claire Undy 17:55

And you have a good break. Enjoy your afternoon. Bye.

Student G (name redacted) 17:57

Oh, thank you. Yeah, you too. Bye.

● **Claire Undy** stopped transcription