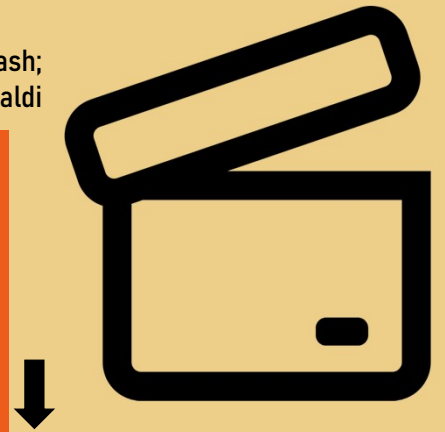




THINKING INSIDE THE BOX: A PEDAGOGICAL JOURNEY

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Thinking Inside the Box (TITB) is a co-curricular project linking students with Latin American archives, serving as a radical experiment in **student-led** learning. With **intentionally undefined** goals, TITB encourages innovative thinking and learning.

IF IN 5 YEARS I DIDN'T RECOGNISE [TITB] THAT WOULD BE A REALLY STRONG OUTCOME -S2

TITB challenged students to seize control of their education, providing an alternative to institutionalised higher education practices.

FINDINGS

'I THINK JUST PICKING YOUR OWN [ASSESSMENT] GIVES YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SOMETHING YOU ARE INTERESTED IN' - 2A

Students consistently praised the project's student-led approach, citing **increased motivation** and **investment** due to their ability to determine its outcome. Traditional educational hierarchies hinder critical thinking development, fostering dependency on educators.

Freire's (1968) 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' emphasises that treating students as passive recipients **oppresses autonomy**, stifling active participation and reinforcing a hierarchy in education.



'I GAVE IT MY INTERPRETATION, MY MEANING OF THINGS' - 8A

TITB students demonstrated a development of **critical consciousness**, exhibiting reflective thinking about the world, society, and personal experiences.

The project empowers individuals by valuing their **unique perspectives and skills**; ultimately, enabling them to contextualise learning and foster a deeper understanding of power dynamics and structural inequalities.

AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

The aim was to assess the impact of the TITB project on students' **learning development** and **skills acquisition** through interviews with students, staff, and stakeholders.

- Employing 'Friendship as method' (Tillman-Healy, 2003) for student interviews fostered a conversational setting and encouraged experiential narrative learning (Clark & Rossiter, 2008)

- Initially, staff interviews followed a structured format, but due to varied staff involvement, a semi-structured approach was adopted for more personalised and relevant responses.

'YOU'RE DEALING WITH THE MATERIALS FIRST-HAND AND IT ALMOST MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE IN A WAY YOU'RE THERE' - 3A

The student encounter with the archive was described as TITB's '**genesis moment**' and was often cited as the most transformative experience by students.

Interacting with primary materials seemed to awaken a deeper level of critical consciousness, as students were able to **contextualise the history** from their own **personal experiences** and view the sources from alternative perspectives.

Furthermore, TITB facilitated connections between students and Latin American communities, particularly those who endured dictatorships. These interactions helped students form a connection to the history.

One group of students held a political poster-making workshop. It engaged the public and arguably surpassed the impact of a traditional exhibition.

'THAT SHARED LEARNING [AND] CREATION WAS FOR ME THE MOST JOYOUS PART, RATHER THAN THE FINAL PIECE' - 4A

Students valued this collaborative and authentic learning experience over formal assessments. The authentic assessment allowed students to **showcase** their skills and knowledge in a **meaningful context**.

Proposed assessments tend to be **less impactful**, as students feel more ownership and fulfilment when they have control over the outcomes of their work.

'IT'S VERY HUMANISING. SOMETIMES HISTORY CAN BE FILTERED THROUGH MANY DIFFERENT PEOPLE' - 3B

References

Clark, M. Carolyn and Rossiter, Marsha; Narrative Learning in Adulthood
Freire, Paulo; Pedagogy of the Oppressed
Freire Paulo; Education for Critical Consciousness
hooks, bell; Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black
Tillman-Healy, Lisa M; Friendship as a Method