Perceptions around what education is for and how it is delivered are seemingly well established and ingrained, as a practitioner of Further Education (FE) I became troubled by traditional methods of delivery and wanted to consider a variety of pedagogical practices. I began to ask, what if we approach pedagogies differently, what if there was another way of doing things that brings student voice and experience to the forefront (hooks, 2003). This dream team invites participants to approach the learning environment differently by engaging with lived experiences of intersectionality and taking pause to respond to the affect in dialogue with one another.

My experience in FE taught me that students often arrive in tertiary education with expectations and perceptions of what constitutes academia. In turn students become fearful of being the ‘other’ the less than perfect so choose not to participate because what if they get it wrong (Adorno & Horkheimer 1997). In conversation with Julie Ovington, we discussed the way in which she approaches the learning environment and made it clear these are not the didactic lectures or seminars that most students expect but are enactments of rhizomatic learning (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Julie explained that she uses objects and prompts for learning to provoke thinking and then acts as a “plug” (M to connect the experience to the theory that needs to be delivered. This in itself disrupted my thinking and I wanted to follow its scent (Bennett, 2010) particularly in relation to the difference between FE and Higher Education (HE), as when I had done similar things in FE the students had a degree of hesitancy, I had imagined that at Higher Education this hesitancy would be much stronger. Julie invited me to be a part of one of her sessions which I gladly accepted.

As our kindship evolved, we wanted to put lived experiences to work to give a richer, more meaningful learning encounter on the forthcoming Equality and Diversity module. The next scheduled session had a focus of ‘disability’ where we decided to enact rhizomatic learning using our lived experiences as the prompts for criticality. The opportunity to do something different and see how students engaged in the session was really exciting. Using a variety of practical experiences, this dream team will explore some of the possible experiences of disability. Thoughts and reflections on different ways of working will be interrogated to consider if they promote more equitable outcomes and potenti (Braidotti, 2019) in learning spaces.

References: