

An evaluation of the University of Central Lancashire's Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) WP Project.

Introduction to UCLan's ECU Project



The aim of the ECU *"Change the Story"* Project which involves various community workshops developed by the Centre for Volunteering and Community Leadership (CVCL). Our aim is to **engage, empower and enable** people from three groups pertinent to the Burnley and Pendle areas with the emphasis on barriers in gaining access to Higher Education as well as **fulfilling their true potential**.

Teachings of Paulo Freire

CVCL has largely based its teaching methods on the work of **Paulo Freire**. McLaren & Leonard (1992:9) highlight that Freire offers a system where the power of learning is shifted from the tutor to the student. Allowing students to take control of the power of learning in a critical manner enables them to break away from the **'culture of silence'** and develop **self-awareness** freeing them to be more than just **'passive objects'** (Fritze, 2010). McLaren and Lankshear (1994:180) discuss Freire's understanding of 'critical consciousness' suggesting those of 'naïve consciousness' see the world as complete and their role is passive. In order for humans to make the transformation from **'naïve consciousness'** to **'critical consciousness'** they need to engage in the social process of dialogue between the teacher (community practitioner) and the student. This dialogue needs to be equal, therefore in the "Change the Story" workshops the **dialogue** consists of the student reflecting on unjust aspects of their reality and working towards solutions to transform them.



ECU Football Workshops: *"Change the Story"*

ECU Football Workshops run for a duration of 11 weeks and has been created by the CVCL team. We are using **football** as a means of **engagement** to target the three groups pertinent to the Burnley and Pendle areas. The idea is to identify barriers at the beginning which are very **generic** and then as the project progresses we then focus on these **barriers** and how they may be resolved in gaining access to Higher Education. The idea is to raise **self-awareness** around barriers in general before moving on to focus on barriers in HE. The ECU Football is also working closely with **Burnley F.C in the Community** who have kindly offered incentives for participants such as, a tour of their stadium on completion of the project.



Fritze, C (2010) <http://www.stclares.ca/pdfs/The%20Theory%20of%20Paulo%20Freire.pdf> Last seen 6th November 2014
 McLaren, P. L. & Lankshear, C. (1994). *Politics of Liberation: Paths from Freire*. London: Routledge.
 McLaren, P. & Leonard, P. (1992). *Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter*. 2nd ed. London: Taylor and Francis.