COMMUNICATION CULTURES IN AFRICA
A Journal for Academics and Practitioners

Vol. 3, No. 1 | December 2023

Introducing the Ubuntu Collaboration Model: An Intersectional Filmmaking Framework for Higher Education Teamwork-Pedagogy

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Abstract

The Ubuntu Collaboration Model (TUCM) seeks to address collaboration tensions of scarce resources and hierarchical roles, in student film-production. It proposes that this is achievable via the ethical maximisation of limited production resources and the consciousness of humanness. TUCM has been designed from practice in, and the study of Nigeria's mainstream cinema, Nollywood. This industry, at its inaugural in 1992, (un)consciously mobilised Ubuntu communal traits including shared ownership, commonwealth, reciprocity, collective survival, and goodwill, to apprehend the prohibitive costs of filmmaking. As part of decolonising-the-curricula initiatives in UK Higher Education, (elements of) TUCM has also been deployed to teach filmmaking on a few undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses. Ubuntu philosophy has been mobilised into discourses of feminism, leadership, literature, and conflict resolution. It has been applied as business model, as well as in dance and childhood pedagogies. This however marks the first time the African philosophy will be utilised to design a collaborative filmmaking model for student film production in Higher Education.

Keywords: Ubuntu philosophy, Intersectionality, teamwork pedagogy, collaboration, stereotype, Nollywood, The Ubuntu Collaborative Model (TUCM), Indigenous Knowledge Systems, media-production, filmmaking, student filmmaking, decolonisation

Introduction

This paper inaugurates a space in teamwork pedagogy, by mobilising the Ubuntu philosophy into media-production pedagogy with regards to teamwork. It commences by unearthing some critical gaps in the Wheelbook Theory, the widely used model for filmmaking-collaboration pedagogy in Higher Education (HE). Materially, HE filmmaking cohorts (in the UK) reflect multi-dimensional differences apropos to age, class, gender, race, culture, nationality, sexuality, disability, accent, appearance, religion, and (English) language proficiency. With this diversity comes networking opportunities, and rich student-experience. It can also present stereotypes and/or inexperience about diverse identities, personalities, situations and such. This pattern frustrates filmmaking collaboration, an essential skillset for (emerging) filmmakers.

There is need for a collaboration model which simultaneously recognises intersectional identities, apprehends stereotypes, fosters equality, solidarity, team-mindedness, as well as a sense of belonging and of shared ownership. Therefore, we propose The Ubuntu Collaboration Model (TUCM) which we have constructed from the African philosophy, Ubuntu. We advance that by its capacity to address these diversities, TUCM pari passu addresses budget and time paucities, two other issues confronting student filmmaking which the Wheelbook Theory overlooks. The Ubuntu model for filmmaking argues that collaboration is inclusive of diversity only when it commences and exists with the conscious determination by teammates to see and value Intersectionality and humanity in one another. It maintains that teammates can also maximise time-restraints and micro-budgets when they operate with this worldview. This ideology, as noted by Tutu (1999), supplies a lens for appreciating humans who are beings inextricably bound together in a "bundle" called life. Though challenging, the vagaries of life are surmountable with a kinship support-system.

This paper stems from the interdisciplinary location of pedagogy, Postcolonialism, Intersectionality, Nollywood, Leadership and African Studies. It occasionally invites primary data from interviews with the first Nollywood director, Obi Rapu, as well as film producer,

Rogers Ofime, and actress, Kate Henshaw. Our anecdotal experiences as academics, will also be presented. We conclude the paper with an agenda to propel TUCM towards other HE pedagogical spaces (like Leadership, and Organisational Management) where collaboration is equally indispensable.

Challenges to Collaboration in HE Filmmaking Courses

Typically, in (UK) HE student productions, students are required to function in one or more of the filmmaking roles—screenwriting, producing, directing, cinematography, production design, editing, sound design, assistant directing, acting, location sound acquisition, script supervision, camera operation, production management, and running. For several (un)conscious reasons, the parameters of these roles can be crossed, or the duties of one role left to another. Because of this ambiguity of definition, the common question of how to embed collaboration pedagogy in learning is maintained. Although an integral part of filmmaking, the question of how to centre collaboration in the pedagogic process can be ambiguous. A sampling of 40 HE courses on filmmaking in the UK, suggests that collaboration hardly constitutes a module requisite for course qualification in UK HEs. Despite this lacking in the curriculum, HE media-production students are expected to know how to collaborate with team-mindedness, respect, team-commitment, time-management, good communication. The collaboration process is further be laboured by role-hierarchisation, as students, in relation to the sub-departments they are assigned to, tend to consider being Head of Department (HoD) as more valuable and desirable. This role-hierarchy can manifest (un)conscious stereotyping like 'gendering', culturalization, nationalisation and racialisation of (HoD) roles. It can also arouse team-work fatigue and feelings of being undervalued. Embedding such collaboration in HE filmmaking pedagogy is an ambitious adaptation of Western(ised) film-industry culture.

This embedding is problematic in several ways. In Western film industries, collaboration and hierarchisation are maintained by the capitalist notions that rely on the implications for (un)employment, reputation, financial remuneration, access to relatively robust budgets, and luxury of time. Substantially, student productions cannot be so determined. Distinctions in work for employment and education restrict the relevance of some of these notions. Certainly, there are limits imposed by the academic calendar and broad demands of students' programmes of study. Such existential realities make team pedagogy scholarship starkly ill-suited for such hierarchisation in student filmmaking. Typically, UK HE student realities include, time constraints and assignment deadlines; paucity of funds; group dynamics and non-commitment. Each student rightly wants their ideas appreciated in the collaboration and also rightly expects to have some sense of ownership of the production. Typically, filmmaking tutors also notice the following. Students often require a film-crew to realise their productions and must collaborate to fulfil their assignment expectations. With access to diverse range of skillsets, students in groups benefit from peer-to-peer learning/support. However, unawareness or disregard for role-limitations means that roles may be blurred, and lines crossed, thereby provoking tensions and communication breakdown. In response to these, filmmaking scholarship[i] seeks to disrupt the hierarchical culture with collaborative approaches inspired by the Wheelbook Theory. We will unpack these approaches and their gaps, in the next section. But as a precursor to that, in the next two paragraphs discuss some problems of these industry hierarchical structures of collaboration, when situated in pedagogic contexts.

The auteur toga typically assigned to directing in film industries could instil a power imbalance in student-group production. The student-director likely takes on the hierarchical position of an auteur, restricted by assignment briefs and scaffolding. This underscores the fact that student productions lack the luxuries of relatively big budgets and time, thus they require the currency

of team-goodwill to be completed. Consequently, contributions from other team members to the productions are typically overshadowed or deprioritised. While auteur-ship can work in Western(ised) industries, teammates in a learning environment will not typically weather this, especially since the pedagogical scenario of the production shields them from far-reaching auteur agency in film industries. Even where role hierarchisation obtains in an industry, it is not without its challenges.

Students' producorial roles are also usually defined by hierarchical descriptions of industry. This can blur the limitations of the roles, more so when it takes on the Hollywood inflection of "creative producer". By the term "creative producer", Prado (2010, p2) and Priggé, (2004, p1) aim to reinforce what they consider as the decentred position of the producer, with the rise of auteur theory. From this position, Rea and Irving (2015, pp xxv - xxvii) argue that the producer "often is, the creative instigator of most films"; evaluating the implications of the director's and key crew members' plans in relation to financing, budgeting, hiring and contracting, is a consequential contribution to the artistic aspects of the production. This evaluation is in addition to ensuring the smooth development and timely completion of the production, along with exhibition, and distribution.

According to Honthaner, (2010, p2) the producer's role goes beyond overseeing scripting, financing, hiring, scheduling, budgeting, contracting, distribution and exhibition. The producer also has "significant input" in "production design,", "editing", "wardrobe", and "musical score" and "develop[ing] the material until it is ready to shop". What makes this contentious, especially in student productions, is that it fails to specify what these "inputs" consist of. It is also contradictory in its insistence that producer's functions include protecting the director's vision, yet remains vague about the producer's limits. Thus producers are set to be accessed of interfering with the directorial vision. This model is unhelpful, especially when applied within student filmmaking. It perpetuates the hierarchical approach to collaboration, and fuels tensions within production teams. Anecdotal experience from some MA-Directing students shows this up in the often heard, often loaded question: "Who is more important – the producer or the director?".

The hierarchical structures in Western(ised) film industries can breed a toxic work environment inimical to learning and student-experience. The tensions experienced by actors in collaboration with directors and producers, is also well documented. According to Hollywood actor, Michael Douglas (in DeKoven 2018) actors are often infantilised. Nancy Lee Myatt (in Schreibman 2012, p110), Hollywood writer-producer, reflects this disrespect vividly, when she describes "the creative producer" as the rational patriarch, and most others in the cast and crew as children inclined to indiscipline. Others who hold similar opinions include Glenn Close (in DeKoven 2018, p160) who suggests that some directors think that good acting should be "left to chance" rather than be considered as a craft polishable by practice. Kate Henshaw (2023, pers. comm) states that careless directing overlooks the indispensability of the actor to a film. Denzel Washington (in DeKoven 2018, p160) and Michael Caine (in DeKoven 2018, p160) maintain that it is amateur directing that insists on micromanaging the actor. As stated above, the scholarship of teamwork pedagogy reviewed below, has made some strides in addressing these issues of collaboration, albeit lacking by way of embedding diversity, inclusion, as well as maximising microbudget and time-constraints.

Teamwork Pedagogy in Screen Production - State of Play:

Teaching and assessing teamwork/collaboration in screen production, continue to pose significant challenges such as how to teach, inculcate and assess collaboration skills (McKay 2017, p106, 107, 108, 126, 128). Broadly speaking, Sabal (2009) combines the terms "team"

(p9), "focused auto-biographical sketch" (p13), and "self-assessment" (p13) to propose a paradigm for teaching collaboration, supporting filmmaking students, and fostering effective collaboration. "Team" means people grouped under shared leadership, responsibility, and conscious authority to achieve a common goal. To achieve Team, Sabal (2009, 9) argues, based on the Cooperative-Learning model (Smith 1996), that tutors should encourage students to collectively develop guidelines girding their collaboration on assigned tasks. This means transparently addressing specific contentions ahead of the productions. Such issues, like protocols for reaching agreements in the course of the production – identifying processes for decision-making, clarifying roles and work-load, meeting or negotiating deadlines, deciding on arbitration in times of deadlocks, who constitutes "final authority for particular decisions". Groups should also consider ahead how to source for funds, important are fund-sourcing and the disbursement of funds. There should be prior agreement on communication channels, meeting times and frequency, and how to deal with indiscipline/non-commitment. Likewise, strategies for handling emergencies, and resolving conflicts—"what happens if someone goes beyond his or her role and tries to do someone else's job?"—need to be addressed (Sabal 2009, p9).

Sabal's construct of the "autobiographical sketch" (2009 p.13) and "self-assessment" (2009, p14) are two tools for preparing students for collaboration. The first is a document which students write, detailing their recent successful contribution to collaboration, and their learning curves. This can enable them draw on past experiences to address inevitable conflicts arising during productions. It can also help them predict the sort of groups in which they function best. This sketch accompanies the "self-assessment" questionnaire which Sabal (2009, p14) developed using the John Bilby Wheelbook Theory. This argues that a person can display positive and/or negative behaviours during group-work. The self-assessment is thus completed with tutor guidance. Each student must document which amongst the eight "principal categories of actions" they will likely take when working in a group. Sabal agrees with the Wheelbook Theory that a person typically reflects one or more of these profiles. Knowledge of the traits they possess can support students to maintain positive behaviours and shift from the negative (we further unpack the Wheelbook Theory in the next section).

Sabal (2009, p15) favours a proactive approach to conflict, based on the model of Laird Schaub (2004). The mediating academic encourages non-judgemental acknowledgement and ventilation of the emotional dimensions of a conflict. In this, maintaining good working "relationship between group members" supersedes focus on who is right or wrong. In this, Sabal assumes that educators are skilled in teamwork pedagogy and that learning cohorts are monocultural. The errors in this position are somewhat similar to the gaps in Hodge's (2009) approach to production collaboration.

Hodge (2009, p22) proposes a set of concepts for developing effective collaboration. The first of these is self-confidence - students should trust their own experience. Then they should be open and honest in sharing their previous experiences. These include patterns of interpersonal interactions at family, community levels and how conflicts are mediated. Members may thus be alerted to attitudes and expectations of teammates. To this end, Hodge argues for the use of questionnaire to gather data on previous filmmaking experiences from media-production students. The information will help identify how to assign them to work in groups, as well as approach conflict. Another dimension to harmonious teamwork for student-productions as proposed by Hodge (2009, p23) is the "Egalitarian/Authoritarian Continuum" which acknowledges the need for mutual respect and clear leadership, where required. Thus, it encourages equitable participation at production meetings so each member can feel valued when their views are aired. Certain production moments require clear leadership; determining

who takes such roles will depend on possession of the expertise required to confront the challenge emanating from the power structures in that instance.

Deep and effective listening (Hodge 2009, p23) is another technique for fostering healthy collaboration, as it helps students understand differing perspectives. These skills are particularly useful in moments of conflict. Citing Burns' (1999), Hodge (2009, p21) identifies four techniques of active listening skills which are effective for dousing tensions: Disarming allows the listener to find "the truth" in the speaker's account of their disagreement; Empathy allows contending group members to see each other's view of the world; Inquiry helps them better understand one another; whilst stroking, sends a respectful message to an opponent. Similar to Sabal (2009), the gap here is that it does not address (un)conscious prejudices that can exist in multicultural groups. Such an awareness enables active listening to be adequately foregrounded with an insistence on the equality of participants. This is necessary if techniques of collegial disarming, empathising, inquiring, and stroking will be properly construed. Without mutual respect, these techniques may be viewed as condescension by the receiver, thereby defeating its purpose. Such outcomes are likely in multicultural groups where vestigial legacies of racial, gender, cultural stereotypes exist. Therefore, without fostering equality in these learning spaces, other measures taken to impart collaborative skills are likely to be threatened by stereotyping mindsets. Hodge (2009, pp24-27) also proposes the inclusion of collaborative measures like script and ideas' feedback sessions, group analysis of key conflict scenes in a film, and "role-playing real-life conflict scenarios" in student media-production. However, for this measure to succeed, there must be a consciousness of Intersectionality instructing the process.

The theory of Intersectionality maintains that identity categories should be treated as though they work in combination, although they appear to exist and act independent of one another. Intersectionality explains the fluid nature of identity. Each person exists with multiple (constructed and existential) identities for instance race, age, class, (dis)ability, culture, religion, nationality, migration status, appearance, accents/language-speaking proficiency, gender and sexual persuasions (Crenshaw and Vistness 1989, 1991, 2017). Depending on contexts, such multi-layered identities when combined may benefit some and disadvantage other persons during public-good interventions (Hooks 1982; Crenshaw and Vistness 1989, 1991, 2017; Davis 2018; Collins and Bilge 2020).

When Intersectionality is foregrounded within class-exercises like how to give peer-feedback, along with sundry manifestations of stereotyping, students can learn to be proactively guard against (subtle), (un)conscious biases in their attitudes, comments, written feedback, to avert conflicts. Appreciation of intersectionality can help one avoid stigmatising others. It may reduce the occurrence of ethnocentrism where some students regard others as intellectually inferior on account of perceived differences in cultural capital. For instance, a person who speaks English with the accent of their mother-tongue, makes some grammatical errors may not be looked down on by classmates who seem more sophisticated, were there is appreciation of intersectionality. With this, there will be an awareness and respect of the knowledge possessed, fluency languages other than English, sophistication in cultures which are comparable, albeit Othered by colonial legacies.

Intersectionality helps reveal the fact that knowledge-construction is not only Western as colonial discourse had perpetuated. Lessons on the subject can also help students appreciate that storytelling approaches are socio-economically, culturally, and/or politically contextual. Thus

(both international and home) students learn to approach stories from unique storytelling cultures and lived-experiences which are not inferior to dominant storytelling systems.

For Banks (2019), collaboration within HE media-production pedagogy should address the gaps created when equality issues and stereotypes are not properly foregrounded. In this belief, his views are similar to Hodge's. The gaps to be addressed manifest starkly in the pedagogical game, "Room at the Top" which is a learning intervention designed to tackle implicit bias and power in media-production classrooms. It ensues from a study exploring gender and racial inequalities in HE media-production (Banks 2019, p83). The game consists of a set of collaborating activities "designed to highlight real-life biases" which as many as 20 to 200 players are encouraged to tackle. The game "provides a safe space for players to test, experiment, and challenge their notions of what it means to collaborate with people", those whom they consider to be different from them (Banks 2019, p85). To win the game, players are required to find ways to moderate their behaviour and responses in production situations; they are to balance power, influence, even their own personalities, and creative output. Through this, participants should be equipped to recognise notions which are inimical to equitable and respectful collaboration.

The role-play game is also vague on how issues of gender and race particularly are to be addressed. Nevertheless, Banks (2019) does offer significant advances by highlighting the tendency of the teamwork scholarship to overlook the dimension of identity-stereotype in media-students' collaboration. The paper lays out how biases around race, gender, sexual persuasions, and economic disparities threaten effective collaboration. To arrest these, Banks (2019, p82) proposes that a diverse range of film texts from minority spaces be brought into classroom discussions and screenings. Furthermore, he proposes that, there should be equal opportunities to education, and HE in particular. In these, institutions must recognise and act on their obligations to ensuring their learning community are safe spaces for students from minoritised identity categories (Banks pp82, 83). Banks goes further than Hodge by acknowledging more demographics of minoritised identities, and suggesting mitigating, albeit non-revolutionary, measures, (Banks 2019, p82). Banks also overlooks protected identity characteristics such as age (where students may be discriminated against on the basis of being considered by their peers as too old or too young and inexperienced), religion, disability, and how each of these can intersect, rather than function individually, to disadvantage students during collaboration productions.

Kerrigan and Aquila (2013, p151) concur with Sabal (2009, p35) that it is educators' responsibility to equip their students with collaborative skills. This is evident in their adaptation of the John-Bilby Wheelbook Model, drawing on Hardin's application (2009) to a previous longitudinal study of 149 screen-production students across two years. The Wheelbook Model (Hardin 2009) underscores eight likely attributes of human behaviour which possibly stem from four attitudes. Two of these four attitudes were classified the Aggressive hemisphere, and the other two, the Passive hemisphere. The Aggressive captures a range of archetypes consisting of the player, the teacher, the can-do, and the artist. When under duress, these get transformed with the player becoming judge, teacher becoming Con-artist, can-do becoming Dictator, and artist becoming rebel (John Bilby in Hardin 2009, p34). In contrast, archetypes in the "Passive Hemisphere", become more passive under duress: The Hard Worker could become The Doormat; The Student becomes The Believer; The Lover becomes The Martyr; The Healer, becomes The Kind Helper (Hardin 2009, p34). Each of these tension-incited manifestations use some degree of manipulation (Hardin 2009, p35). According to Hardin (2009, p34) the Wheelbook Model helps one gain better awareness of self through interactions in others—for instance, learning about their strengths and weaknesses. It is therefore effective for imparting skills that help

students recognise those behaviours which could hinder their collaborations; with such awareness, students can go on to correct the behaviours. In other words, learning from self-awareness activities created with reference to the Wheelbook Model helps one recognise and moderate the manipulative tendencies of oneself, and those of others (p35). Hardin's (2009, p41) application of this model involves students completing a survey through which each individual reflects on their approaches to collaboration in past and present circumstances. This survey is a set of multiple-option questions that helps the educator identify which of the traits outlined in the Wheelbook Model apply to the students. To support this classification, the educator can then facilitate conversations that help the students understand the implications of their choices, and how these impact on collaborative projects (p41). As deployed by Hardin (2009), the model does not acknowledge that, indeed, Intersectionality surely influences group collaboration.

By combining the previous approaches (Sabal, 2009; Hardin, 2009; Hodge, 2009; Kerrigan and Aquila, 2013) Dooley and Secton-Flick (2017) have advanced the Wheelbook Model to enable it to foster a sustained learning environment. Their approach embeds the model in curricula spanning the entire academic year. Thus, it can be a comprehensive support for student productions, going beyond a few lectures on collaboration, but including an evaluation phase. Based on their findings, Dooley and Secton-Flick (2017, p85) acknowledge that a limitation to the Wheelbook Model may be its insufficiency for identifying over time, an "overwhelming trend in regard to the cohort's changed responses to the Wheelbook questions". They consider that it may rather be best utilised for student's self-analysis of development appropriate to collaboration skills. Like previous research in the discourse, they also offer no attention to the role of Intersectionality in student collaboration. Kerrigan and Aquilla (2013) also deploy the Wheelbook Model for their study of collaboration in a media-production HE space. They deploy this model to gauge collaborative tendencies amongst student-cohorts in Australia, and in Singapore, Kerrigan and Aquilla (2013, p152). A weakness of the model is the implicit or unconscious suggestion that, as one of several models in the HE curricula, it evidences the dominant influence Western concepts have on HE curricula around the world (Kerrigan and Aquilla 2013; p152). The considerations above detail substantially some existing literature on teamwork pedagogy apropos to the curricula of HE media-production. Although Holt (2021) addresses the importance of collaboration in the redesign of filmmaking curricula, it does not specifically develop a model for teaching collaboration in this context.

Challenges of the Wheelbook Theory:

To several degrees, the John-Bilby Wheelbook Model (Hardin 2009) sits at the heart of most of the texts reviewed above, and as a precursor to introducing Ubuntu as a more inclusive collaborative model for filmmaking. The Wheelbook model stems from the Bilby philosophy of the "self that is set deeply within experience" (Hardin 2009, p34), or the self that is because of "all the conscious experiences of all…human functions that one can have for one's 'own self'" (Bilby in Hardin 2009, p45). Two problems lie with this model widely adopted by screen production pedagogy. The first is the perpetuation of a Western curricula on a student body consisting of multiple cultures and, by implication, experiences. This thus means that, in the typical multicultural composition of HE (in the UK, today), several students of non-Western, cultures are socialised in philosophies of the definition of self through/in relation to their communities. Therefore, in contradiction to the discourse around decolonisation, this model perpetuates the unhelpful domination of education curricula with Western media cultures. The second is the model's partial reliance on the experiences of the participating students, implied by the definition of self as a sum of one's experiences. Note that these experiences would naturally include individual exposures, or lack thereof, to unfamiliar cultures. In addition to these problems, inherent in the Wheelbook definition is that, in practice, it does not particularly advance the

need to centre tenets of "we" (e.g., values of shared ownership and collective survival), rather than self, that are indispensable to student filmmaking collaborations. The "we" is central to such productions, especially in instances when challenges to collaboration occur. Anecdotal experiences of academics include situations where mismatches in time availability or flexibility (for example, the situations of some group members whose economic realities mean they need to balance (part-time) paid work with study). Mahler (2020), as well as D'Alessandro and Volet (2012) highlight this challenge. Although research into these dynamics remains scant, it is important to consider how they impact (communication, evidence of commitment and task accomplishment in the process of) collaboration.

Three factors inherent to the theoretical taxonomy of Bilby render it insufficient as a collaborative tool. First, in its philosophical moments, its focus on "I" is problematic to the nature of collaborative filmmaking which advocates for an "us" rather than "I" worldview. As a matter of fact, this philosophy is particularly counterproductive to the spirit of true collaboration where resources—financial, time and expertise—are scarce, thus requiring team to reciprocally rely on one another. Second, more so by implication, Bilby's Wheelbook is founded on the individualistic nature of Western cultures. While it may work with students of Western cultural extractions, it may prove frustrating for those of communal orientations, accustomed to communal task execution. There is also the potential for this guideline for collaboration to unconsciously set the former up to thrive over the latter, since for the former, this focus on the individual is familiar terrain. Moreso, it perpetuates that pathology of colonial knowledge construction frowned upon by several HE students, where Western cultures dominate curricula, (Why is My Curricula White? 2014; Iwowo and Iwowo 2021; Winter et al 2022; Szabó-Zsoldos 2023). Kerrigan and Aquila (2013, p152) also acknowledge this point by the statement that there is a "globalization or Western bias in Higher Education [curricula]". Third, there is also the stereotype, which likely arises from the ambiguous submission of the theory, that one can develop collaborative skills from the sum of one's experiences. The argument that "the ability to reflect on it [experience]" can make productions run smoothly overlooks the often-common situations where students arrive from different corners of the world, young and inexperienced about worlds outside of theirs. For instance, several are unfamiliar with sophisticated awareness of the intersectional dimensions of identity (Crenshaw and Vistnes 1989) which enrich interpersonal interactions. In other words, the Wheelbook Model of collaboration and its applications in filmmaking collaboration tends to decentre this crucial factor of intersectionality in the discourse of teamwork pedagogy.

Consequently, the need for a decolonised lens for teamwork pedagogy is imperative, especially with the multicultural composition of HE student cohorts. The following sections will invite the Ubuntu philosophy as an alternative framework for teamwork collaboration in media-production curricula. By this submission, this paper does not intend to state that this African philosophy is the best framework for designing filmmaking. It is rather invited for its longstanding essence as a multi-layered lens for fostering the communal-mindedness that rejects role-minoritizing labels and amplifies sustainable collaboration—especially when challenged by paucities of funds and time, for example, the goodwill built on the understanding of humanity as an interconnected, interdependent collective is required. We argue that, regardless of the collaboration model deployed in filmmaking curricula, the Ubuntu philosophy, with ethics of reciprocity, respect for human dignity, and shared ownership as its roots, needs to be foregrounded to robustly support collaboration from a comprehensibly inclusive trajectory.

Teamwork Pedagogy - Welcome, Ubuntu

Ubuntu - Philosophy and contexts:

Molose et al (2018) offer that "Ubuntu is attributed to the longings of African people for communal bonds that researchers aspire to explain". The ubiquitous definitions of Ubuntu demonstrate this much. Ramose (2015, p69) describes the philosophy of Ubuntu as that which captures a multidimensional African definition of humanness "which regards being or the universe as a complex wholeness involving the multi-layered and incessant interaction of all entities". In other words, this definition of humanness manifests the source and intrinsic order of life. From this belief, he (Ramose 2015, p70) also posits that by the definition of Ubuntu, "to be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognising the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish humane relations with them". Underscoring this point is Mbigi's explanation (2007, P4): "Ubuntu literally translated means 'I am because we are; I can only be a person through others'". Maintaining the "emphasis on solidarity and interdependence" found in the ubuntu worldview deliberately spotlights the key character of "Africa's communities of affinity". The consequence of this is that one cannot be human all by oneself but requires others for that wholeness to manifest. From this consciousness, for instance, flows the African proverb), "it takes a village to raise a child". Similarly, the African belief that a person can have, in addition to their biological mother, other mothers drawn from immediate and wider communities, stems from this consciousness. Thus, it is common in Nigerian societies, to find a person typically referring to several women as "mother" and men, as "father". In the Igbo languages, this philosophy underpins the typical reference to a neighbour, friend or acquaintance as nwa nnem, meaning "child of my mother".

i. Ubuntu as belonging in the family of life: In their traditional moments, Ubuntu expressions are underlined by the African definitions of humanness. In the Ubuntu view, to be human is to be "seen as a characteristic of the whole species because humanity signifies different elements of the human species. African humankind constitutes one family. Thus, one gains humanity by entering this relationship with other members of the family" (Mabovula 2011, p41). It stems from the understanding that life has vicissitudes which cannot be weathered without a support system, and the guarantee for having this support system is by belonging to and sincerely investing in it to support others in it in their times of need. Therefore Tutu (1999: 31) illustrates Ubuntu as the state of understanding that humankind inextricably "belong in a bundle of life".

In this "family of life" one recognises that persons need to work together. Hence, one is oriented to develop certain key traits which strive towards maintaining human dignity, equality, and compassion. Mabovula (2011, p41) lists them as, "being caring, humble, thoughtful, considerate, understanding, wise, generous, hospitable, socially mature, socially sensitive, virtuous and blessed". These traits are demonstrations of humanness. Nuances of these traits manifest in communal-minded values of what Mbigi (1997) theorises as the Ubuntu collective finger theory: all digits must correspond harmoniously; though strong, a thumb needs a finger or more, and vice versa, for grip. Thus, the Ubuntu fingers are "[collective] Survival, Solidarity, Compassion, Respect and Dignity". The attitudes of winning together, shared wealth (Mbigi 2007, p5), strength in numbers (Mulaudzi 2014, p12), and shared ownership/vision (Ncube 2014, p79), have also been variously evidenced as part of the Ubuntu ethos. Broodryk (2004, p27) details a number of outcomes from applying the above, including togetherness, kinship, supporting equality, eschewing discrimination, and fostering an environment of happiness and love.

One might counter that this philosophy is unrealistic in its erasing of the essence of the individual, since the innate human desire for recognition is a propellant for accomplishment of key milestones. Chinyowa (2000, p90) corrects this notion by discussing how the communal worldview equitably allows for the celebration of individual abilities:

"It should be pointed out that while the individual may be defined in terms of the group to which he/she belongs, he/she has allowed enough room to demonstrate personal talent and initiative for the common good.

Indeed, African philosophy celebrates individual ability, as can be evidenced by many titles of personal achievement that are used by the Shona peoples…There is a sound balance between individual and collective effort that goes far beyond the notion of excessive individual freedom and independence…very person is a nexus of interacting elements of the self and of the world which shapes and is shaped by his or her behaviour."

Mupedziswa et al (2019, p23), discusses the reciprocity dimension of Ubuntu in the statement that Ubuntu is predicated on a quid pro quo, demonstrated in a spirit of sharing and empowering others as an "investment for assistance in the future". For instance, this consciousness of kinship drove the early economic boom of Nigeria's mainstream cinema, Nollywood, where filmmakers worked pro bono on one another's productions (Okhai 2008; Iwowo and Iwowo 2021; Iwowo, et al 2023; Iwowo 2022). Nollywood in its early and traditional forms, characterised by direct-to-DVD and direct-to-YouTube productions and inoculated against capitalist tendencies of its cinema sphere (neo-Nollywood), is a child of Ubuntu (Iwowo 2018; Iwowo et al 2023).

ii. Ubuntu as diversity and inclusion: A counter argument to the realism of Ubuntu is that the purported outcomes should have prevented the sparks of ethnic tensions (such as the recent xenophobic attacks in South Africa) and wars across Africa. However, it would be remiss to discuss these turbulences without the context of colonial legacies like divide and conquer, inferiorisation (Iwowo 2011, pp181-182; 2015, pp416) colonial mentality. Furthermore, the Ubuntu philosophy has been impactful when deliberately deployed for crisis resolutions on the continent—the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1996), being a seminal case in point. Indeed, it is also arguable that the position of South Africa as one of the first countries in the world to enshrine in its constitution the anti-discrimination of persons on the basis of their sexual orientation, is one instructed by the Ubuntu tenets of tolerance and respect for diversity. More explicitly, the contentions of precolonial acceptances of same-sex marriages and liaisons in several African societies (Zabus 2013; Jjuuko and Tabengwa, 2018; Currier and Migraine-George, 2017) suggest the extent to which diversity and respect are enshrined in Ubuntu.

With respect to disability, the diversity and inclusion in traditional African societies has been challenged by Onyemelukwe & Ken-Akparanta (2021), who detail multidimensional ableist attitudes in Igbo traditions and proverbs of Africa. In other words, these truths contradict the varied constructions above of Africa as Ubuntu-minded. What has not been acknowledged therein is that several Igbo proverbs also espouse inclusion of and sensitivity towards diversity, in the philosophy of Ubuntu. One of several instances, is that which urges patience for stuttering: "with time, a stammerer will pronounce his father's name". In summary the call to tolerance is explicit, therein. In discussing the gender-equality dimensions of Ubuntu, Chisale (2018) focuses on the non-gendered approach to care-giving to the vulnerable in Zulu societies, a fact that problematises arguments of Ubuntu as anti-feminist. In proposing the relevance of Ubuntu to feminist discourse, Cornell and Marle (2015), debate how Ubuntu can be fashioned as a feminist tool to meaningfully articulate "transindividuality and ways of social belongings", thus solving "some of European feminism's own dilemmas and contradictions". In other words, it could be beneficially positioned to at once "refuse the demands of patriarchy, as well as the confines of liberal feminism." So far, this section has been discussing Ubuntu as per its multidimensional prioritisation of human interconnectivity for progress, on frameworks of values respectful of

intersectional identities. We will conclude it with the Ubuntu philosophy of tolerance, equally crucial to the model in question.

The philosophy of tolerance in Ubuntu means to actively seek harmony and shared understanding with patience, recognition of and respect for differences. In this definition, tolerance helps place humans in the perpetual state of patience as they seek/foster understanding amongst one another (Mabovula 2011, p41). This is different from condonation, pity, pacifism. In fact, Mabovula (2011, p41) accentuates that disagreements are not avoided but rather approached with the worldview that "they need not cause harm if tolerance and respect for other people's viewpoint in the community structure". Hence, conflicts are mediated by "mov[ing] away from confrontation towards conciliation" (p41). This is done with the definitions of humanness and tolerance by Ubuntu standards—fostering remorse, repentance, and redemption (Tutu 2012)—rather than what Davis (2016) alludes to as the capitalist humiliation and dehumanisation, geared in substantial measure at oiling the industry of imprisonment. In this instance, once again, the objectives of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission come to mind, where traumatic lacerations of erstwhile apartheid era were addressed via Ubuntu rather than via revenge (Tutu 2012, p34). The same African worldview underscores the famous "no victor, no vanquished" policy (Ekpo 2016, pp16-17) at the end of the Nigerian Civil War in 1970. Although in hindsight the reconciliation framework in the former appears more genuine that the latter. In both instances cited, the focus transcended punitive, confrontational, naming-and-shaming approaches, striving towards collective open conversations and healing.

Ubuntu Manual – Illustration 1

Ubuntu as, belonging in the family of life:	Human-kind constitutes one family
	Foster and invest commitment to an Ubuntu support system.
	Caring, humility, thoughtful, considerate, understanding, generous, hospitable, socially mature, socially sensitive.
	Working in solidarity, kinship, collective survival and harmony, towards a common mutually beneficial goal.
	Maintain human dignity, showing respect and tolerance, supporting equality, eschewing discrimination, honouring compassion, saluting humanness, propagating harmony, endorsing sharing, showing sympathy, practising empathy
	Winning together; shared wealth; strength in numbers, shared ownership/vision
	Redistributing wealth, justified obedience to customs, fostering an environment of happiness and love.
	Celebrating individual ability, and achievement, with a sound balance between individual and collective effort
	Offer and reciprocate kindness; honour quid pro quo

Ubuntu Manual – Illustration 2

Ubuntu as diversity and inclusion:	Tolerance and respect for diversity of races, religions, culture (histories, contemporaries, and imaginaries), countries, philosophies, ways of knowledge production.
	Actively unlearning stereotypes of countries, accents, gender, race, cultures, sexual orientation, class, disability, age
	Respecting diverse sexual persuasions
	Inclusive of disability, gender-equality
	Respectful of intersectional identities
	Imbibing the Ubuntu notion of tolerance (different from condonation, pity, pacifism)
	Ubuntu approach to conflicts resolution (conciliation rather than confrontation; honest conversations and healing)

The Ubuntu Collaborative Model (TUCM):

Before unpicking The Ubuntu Collaborative Model (TUCM), here is a summary of the philosophy: Ubuntu fosters diversity and inclusion. Rather than stratifying individuals, sincere acknowledgement of individual expertise, intersectional identities, and socio-economic locations will advance collectivist communities. TUCM offshoots from the 2013-2018 study of Nollywood (Iwowo 2018), as a disruptor of the hegemonic filmmaking standards of the West, engineered by "an unconscious movement" where kinship and quid pro quo, quickly made it possible for Nigerian filmmakers to produce about 2,000 films per month. In these traditional forms, cast and crew have a steady stream of (modest) income. Filmmaking also became democratised from the "mystical" realms complexified by prohibitive budgets and equipment (Okome 2007; Rapu 2023; pers. comm) which colonial cinema had placed it. Indeed, post-1990 filmmakers in Nigeria realised that, upon the Ubuntu culture of interdependency, these impediments which Diawara (1992) terms colonialism's "technological paternalism", can be significantly trammelled. Noteworthily, Ubuntu has signified Nollywood as the second highest producing film industry in the world (Masterclass 2022, Times London 2022, AVACI 2023). The inaugural film of Nollywood, Living in Bondage (1992) was collectively developed by amateur filmmakers, programme creators from the Nigerian Television Authority, stage and TV actors, theatre-arts teachers/university graduates, small/medium-scale entrepreneurs, retirees, and unemployed university graduates from different fields.

This 163-minute feature was made with "N150,000"[ii] (Ogunjiofor 2011) and on the sheer strength of an Ubuntu culture. Acting fees typically "ranged between N100 and N1,000[iii] (Rapu 2023, pers. comm). These minimalist costs were made possible by the cast and crew who were more interested in telling their story than in profits (Onu 2016, pers., comm). Rapu (2023, pers., comm) also recalls that Living-in-Bondage script was collaboratively developed by producer, writer, and the director but the script had no dialogue (Rapu 2023, pers. Comm; Asiegbu 2015, pers. comm). During rehearsals, actors developed dialogue as appropriate to the scene objectives, with directorial supervision (Rapu 2023, pers. comm). This production style soon became the culture of producing in Nollywood, (with the exception of dialogue-improvisation which has since given way to screenplays inclusive of dialogue). Audiences from diverse socio-economic class and ethnic-locations, soon embraced Nollywood across Nigeria, and overtime, across Africa. And in no time, this birthed a proliferation of films made on this minimalist, Ubuntu-styled systems across the African continent, displacing what is African Cinema – dependent on international Western film grants, often incapable to commercial success and perpetuating of Western hegemonic filmmaking budgets (Iwowo 2018, p341). Scholarship about this low-budget and collaborative nature of Nollywood abounds, thus need not be repeated here.

By proposing TUCM, this paper is interested in bridging gaps in current filmmaking collaboration models which overlook the crucial place and affordances of Intersectionality in multicultural groups yet this is exponentially the reality in HE film-production classrooms. The authors also stress the realities of scarce resources – finance and production skills – which can only be mitigated with relatively robust production budgets that elude students. Time constraints, and role-hierarchisation are also factors that often frustrate student collaboration. Solutions to these require a level of collectivisation hinged on an Ubuntu consciousness where the tenets of kinship, dignity, goodwill, collective survival, shared-ownership, commonwealth, reciprocity, respect for intersectional identities, and tolerance are ethically and sustainably impelled. As a tool for collaboration in student filmmaking, TUCM comprises three stages: i) Fostering an ontological understanding of Ubuntu, ii) defamiliarising filmmaking roles via Ubuntu, and ii) supporting Ubuntu-internalisation processes via proactive scaffolding.

i. Fostering an ontological understanding of Ubuntu:

Due to Eurocentric dismissal of indigenous knowledge (Ngubane and Makua 2021, p1; Battiste and Henderson 2017, p45), and colonised curricula, Ubuntu philosophy could be largely unknown to Western curricula. Thus, before introducing TUCM to HE curricula there should be an introduction of Ubuntu – its origins, ethics, modus operandi, benefits, and challenges. Scholarship on Ubuntu (including those cited in the literature-review above), can supply the relevant reading materials. To provide a comprehensive understanding of the discourse, the challenges to Ubuntu should also be ventilated for discussion. Indeed, if untrammelled by its tenets of respect and reciprocity, Ubuntu can be misappropriated to manifest entitlement (Mhlongo 2019, p10), emotional blackmail, paternalism, and infantilisation (Dangarembga 1988). Chisale (2018, p1) also details instances where the philosophy is misconstrued as patriarchal within some feminist discourse.

To non-initiates, learning about Ubuntu is best approached from the combined teaching formats. Lectures will enable the unpicking of the discourse. Workshops will be useful for gaming activities to support sensemaking of the lectures, as well as for interrogating, and reflecting on them. For instance, some role-plays, and hypothetical case-studies can help identify ubuntu persons (Tutu 2012, p34), Ubuntu moments, and actions, as well as its challenges. Learners can be encouraged to read, raise questions and concerns regarding Ubuntu in seminars. Seminars can also offer opportunities for tutor-supervised conversations that can help the normalisation of Ubuntu among learners.

To understand Ubuntu for the purpose of collaboration within multicultural spaces, the philosophy is best taught with references to histories, meanings, impacts and affordances of stereotypes apropos to Intersectionality. As discussed in the literature review, Intersectionality skills can aid students' appreciation of how persons can be stereotyped based on the multidimensions of their identities like race, culture, class, (dis)ability, nationality, sexual orientation, gender, religion, age, appearance, and migrant status. Such learning of Ubuntu pari passu stereotype and Intersectionality is crucial since one cannot transcend performative acts of humanness without profound appreciation of discursively constructed impediments to respecting the humanity, and (diverse) intersectional positionality of one another. It is equally important that this is taught as an imperative for human relations, rather than for incitement of guilt by (ancestral) associations; also to foster understanding, unity and solidarity. HE educators who supervise these collaborations are also expected to have adequate training in this regard. There is the erroneous tendency to assume that HE media-production tutors are by default so trained, however Riebe et al (2017, p636) accurately stress that training opportunities may be insufficient, or tutors may not see the need for them.

ii. Defamiliarising filmmaking roles:

Defamiliarising in this sense proposes a consideration which involves mediating the popular hierarchical-role collaboration in Hollywood and British film/TV industries with the Ubuntu ethic of respect and equality. In other words, role-hierarchy is replaced with equality cognisant of respect for unique specialisms, functions, and limits of each role. This way, for instance, the runner is equal to the director; they each occupy roles which are equally indispensable to the production so must be equally respected and supported to achieve their goals. In the context of that production, they each have the expert skills for the roles, consequently neither can dismiss, disregard, or condescend to the other's opinions regarding their role-contributions to the production. The rationale here is to help students see that, unless supported by Ubuntu, the eight challenges of student-filmmaking discussed above (in the section above Challenges to

Collaboration in H.E. Filmmaking Courses), problematises the unmediated application of hierarchical-roles as practiced in most mainstream industries.

This stage begins with dividing the class into production teams with each student reflecting the main film-production departments. To reflect inclusivity and diversity, this division is best done with attention to Intersectionality. For instance, are the number of international students and home-students equitably represented in each group? The same considerations apply to gender, race/ethnicity, culture, sexual persuasion, disability, and skillsets. Regarding deployment of required skillsets for instance, ensure that no group is unfairly (dis)advantaged in terms of comprising of the best-skilled directors, producers, production designers, screenwriters, cinematographers, editors, and sound designers. This would make for equality. Next, each group is required to list the duties of each department according to their understanding, and how to prioritise each. These tasks are then brought to the next class session for a tutor-led discussion where the implications of the roles and their place in the stated hierarchies are juxtaposed with the eight challenges to student productions. This can be facilitated through a role-play where a short screenplay without a budget is provided to students for their production. This will be hypothetically assessed. Typically, the encumbrances and tensions in executing this task from a hierarchical standpoint quickly becomes evident, and depending on the temperaments of the teammates, even impossible. The conversation is then guided to help students consider how the duties of each role can be structured to modify the place of hierarchy with the Ubuntu notions of "family", diversity, and inclusion. This can be presented through a three-phase task.

Phase-1 Task: Defining the limits of each role and assigning roles

Each team, with tutor supervision, is tasked to make a one-page list that outlines the limits of each production role. They will then consider how these roles can be made more collaborative with the Ubuntu notions of solidarity, tolerance, active listening, dignity, respect mindful of the responsibilities attached to each role, and how shared ownership will foster the equitable incorporation of diverse ideas. These should also be considered with attention to how stereotypes can taint them. This document is subsequently ventilated in a tutor-led seminar to ensure everyone understands and agrees with the measures designed. Teams should be trusted to divide crew roles independent of tutor supervision; this provides opportunities for the tutor to observe how they demonstrate the understanding of Ubuntu. It also provides opportunities for their intervention where this is lacking or disingenuously deployed, by way of tokenism or acts of affirmative discrimination, which are equally as destructive as stereotyping. Some of the questions that can aid the role assigning process can include:

1) levels of commitment to meetings,

2) interference of life challenges/other job schedules with the film project goals, milestones and overall production schedule,

3) the number of other production commitments they have.

Having said these, reasonable concessions should be made for disabled teammates who may require more time and support to achieve their tasks.

Phase-2 Task: Designing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

This task involves the teams each developing a two-page MOU, with attention to the "Ubuntu manual" (see Ubuntu Illustrations 1 and 2). Teams should ensure that they articulate how to

address specific issues that had been raised in previous stages of this process. In any case, they should ask, what Ubuntu values in the Ubuntu Manual will the MOU explicitly and combinatorially imbibe? How will we reflect them in our collaboration? These become important, since the MOU is expected to detail how they plan to work together with respect to Intersectionality and stereotype. The tutor is expected to review the MOU with close attention to how they imbibe sensitivity to Intersectionality and stereotype, and is to provide feedback/feedforward as required. (Responsibilities like this is why we have stressed above, the need for tutors to also be skilled in TUCM).

Also necessary in the MOU is agreeing on suitable times for regular (pre-)production meetings which are sensitive to the academic, work, life demands of teammates. Allowing for hybrid meeting formats can democratise participation. Besides their effective planning and collaboration functions, meetings can be sites for reinforcing Ubuntu solidarity, through bonding (dancing/singing and gaming) activities; these light activities are widely popular for reinforcing a sense of belonging. As an incentive to team commitment to the MOU, prizes/awards may be incorporated into the agreement to single out Ubuntu persons for recognition. To strengthen equality, team-members with the typically least-attractive roles such as production-managers, assistant directors, camera operators, data wranglers, runners, can be invited to be the Ubuntu supervisory team which is responsible for ensuring that the production is guided by the tenets of the MOU, and for recommending teammates to the tutor for Ubuntu-person recognitions. Recommendation must be based on provision of verifiable indicators of from the MOU for their worthiness of it.

Phase 3 Task: Proactive Scaffolding - Collaboration in action

One challenge to student filmmaking collaboration as rightly identified by Hodge (2009, p24), is tutors having to balance listening skills with the equally important place of nurturing student-filmmaker's "original voice". The latter is also a strategic collaboration-skill. Striking this balance becomes possible if the supervising tutor guides the process to ensure that the Ubuntu-informed MOUs are actioned during collaboration. The Ubuntu values of shared ownership and every voice matters, informs the team to collectively agree on the subject-matter to make a film about with attention to time and budget constraints. That of respect ensures that the "original voice", (expression of expertise/role) is allowed to thrive. The following passages illustrates how this respect and voice can find expression.

The producer develops the preproduction brief detailing the story's genre, timeliness, market viability, target-audience, demographics, competition, market-challenges and mitigations to it, budgetary parameters, and schedule of completion. This is done based on the agreed subject-matter, its time, budget affordances, and rationale premised on evidence from verifiable research. The producer is not expected to design the visual look of the film, as this encroaches the director's space. Once the brief is completed, it is sent to the team for their input which should be done with regard for the producer's specialism and research they have invested in the brief. Once the brief is greenlit by the team, the screenwriter is respected to develop the story and screenplay based on this brief and thorough research. The team-agreed number of drafts are sent to team for their feedback which must be strictly guided by the brief and techniques which allow for relevant diverse approaches to visual storytelling. This ensures that the story developed is producible as well as reflective of the team's diverse cultures.

Once the screenplay is ready, the director develops the directorial vision with core attention to the producer's brief, which is important for the purpose of ensuring producibility. After the initial stage of ideating the vision, it is sent to the cinematographer, production design, sound designer

and editor who feedback on how it can be enriched from their various disciplines. The updated vision is thereupon shared with the team for their inputs and suggestions for improvement. All this while, producer supervises to ensure that the directorial vision keeps faith with the brief, so that schedule, viability, market, dissemination and impacts are not derailed. In this environment of reinforcing equal humanness, interconnectedness and reciprocity, each team-mate comes to firmly understand and respect the limits of their roles and expectations to be proactive in complimenting each other's efforts within reason – for instance, being attentive to team-mates and enquiring "Do you need help?", if one observes a team-mate is sincerely struggling. The place of reciprocity, commitment and respect are also necessary as corresponding skillsets here, to apprehend a team-mate taking undue advantage of kind offers of assistance.

Proactive Troubleshooting: Supervising tutors can support the collaborative process by creating an environment of trust where teammates are confident to share their concerns or disenchantments regarding teammates or team-decisions with the tutor. Ubuntu ways to address such includes non-judgemental, conciliatory engagements which allow for open conversations between aggrieved parties. These conversations are progressive where they retain focus on the issues rather than persons, and where the impact on the persons is highlighted with the view of fostering patience, mutual understanding, apologies and acceptance of apologies as applicable; where parties find agreements by the mediating tutor being for mutually suitable ways forward. These conversations need to discourage the bottling of hurt. For instance, it can dispel animosities based on perceptions that tears signify emotional immaturity or unruliness.

Another part of this scaffolding process, is the provision of an avenue for anonymous submission of complaints and concerns in relation to teammates or team attitudes; this can also provide otherwise introverted students, the means to ventilate concerns and grievances. Response in this regard may include calling the team for a meeting to further understand the situation and collectively seek conflict resolution. Depending on the stage of the production, reshuffling the roles may help ease tensions; making impromptu spot-checks can also help apprehend the tensions. Encouraging minute-taking by way of audio-visual recording or written notes will also prove a supportive and circumspective guide, as documentation means reflection is easier and persons are careful when their words and actions are being documented. Having said these, responding to anonymous complaints could prove counterproductive especially where they relate to safeguarding issues. In these cases, it is best to contact the university's relevant student-wellbeing and/or legal departments who are sufficiently equipped in such situations to provide guidance on a case-by-case basis.

Biweekly tutor-led meetings with all the teams can also help to gauge collaboration atmospheres. In addition to issues arising, meeting agenda can benefit from kudos-giving segments where teammates are encouraged to provide positive feedback to one another, as well as self-critique on how they can improve on their current interpersonal skills. When not backhanded, such opportunities for self-critique and positive affirmation of teammates, foster unity, understanding, and trust. Indeed, showing vulnerability by way of normalising learning, "sharing crucible moments" and "showing moral humility" are some ways of building leadership skills and interpersonal relationships (Cable 2022).

Conclusion

Several scholarly works on teamwork pedagogy share our position on the need to centre teamwork pedagogy in filmmaking curricula. The concluding question then is how best to implement the proposed model, and this must be fully aware of minefield along the way, since the benefits of TUCM are not without attendant issues. The process could be open to various forms of abuse be it through display of a sense of entitlement, emotional blackmail or such. Similarly, attempts to foster a culture of collaboration using the Ubuntu paradigm is likely to be time-consuming (at least in the first instance till it becomes well known and embedded in practice). Unlike the Wheelbook Model, its intersectional approach used to foster understanding, team mindedness and commitment requires support.

The support required in the process has implications for the programmes of study. Students involved need to be introduced to discourses of equality and diversity; they should be made to understand concepts such as stereotypes and Intersectionality. This learning process necessitates conceptual lectures, workshop activities and seminar discussions supported by proactive scaffolding. While the current structure of the H.E. academic year (in the UK and elsewhere) may be inflexible to accommodate the time needed, a module dedicated to collaboration may prove difficult to mount. Instead more serious attention can be invested in embedding it in the curricula of filmmaking – not as an add-on, but as important as an integral element of the creative and technical aspects of the craft. Another option is to embed TUCM within the curricula. This can be achieved by dedicating some sessions to TUCM, throughout the foundational semester or academic year, (as applicable).

One more dimension to note is the matter of assessment; tutors are required to note breaches that occur in the collaboration during the filmmaking process. Observing and assessing such breaches is easy when behaviours can be observed, but assessment will prove difficult when these breaches are implicit behaviours. For instance, micro aggressions are elusive, so nebulous to pinpoint (Espaillat et al 2019, p144), (re)producing "subtle forms of oppression in interpersonal interactions" (Sue and Spanierman 2020, p228).

During intense stages of collaboration students are wont to resort to the unhelpful capitalist models – the auteur theory, the producer as the sole head of the production, or the convolution of roles. Each of these three are problematic, as they echo bruising inequalities which cast and crew who are not in the leadership roles, must endure for the purpose of the film. This paper has called attention to certain groups who tend to be considered as not fit for leadership within those capitalist models. It has presented options that help ameliorate the inequalities in the classrooms. The intersectional materiality of gender/race/class inequalities manifests in various ways – culture shock, inferiorization, cliques, hostilities between international vs home students. All these can inform casting and crewing up; when not adequately addressed they also can defy the discourse of collaboration. Confronting them with an awareness of Intersectionality and African values as concealed in The Ubuntu Collaborative Model (TUCM) should help to foster humanness, reduce stigma and uncover stereotypes that exist at granular levels. With this the learning opportunities provided in students' filmmaking may be made more equitable. The creative potentials that lie in students from otherwise marginalised cultural contexts may thus be released to the benefit of the film academy.

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[i] These include Smith (1996), Sabal (2009) Hodge (2009), Hardin (2009), Kerrigan and Aquila (2013), McKay (2017), Dooley and Secton-Flick (2017), Banks (2019) and Holt (2021).

[ii] As at 2014 circa the time of the research on the history of Nollywood by one of the authors, the sum of One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Nigerian Naira (₦150,000) was approximately equivalent to Four Hundred (£400), UK Pounds Sterling.

[iii] This is approximately between Six Pounds Sterling and 29 Pounds Sterling (£6 and £29), according to fxtop.com 2023]