

PRACTICE DOCUMENT 3:

SITUATED PRACTICE-EVENTS

African Leadership Academy

*PRACTICE DOCUMENT 3 should be read in conjunction with
CHAPTER 5: PRACTICE RESEARCH: Situated Phase and alongside
the Practice Video: SITU_ALA Practice Events Video*

CONTENTS

SITU ALA IR1

SITU ALA IR2



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SITU ALA_IR1

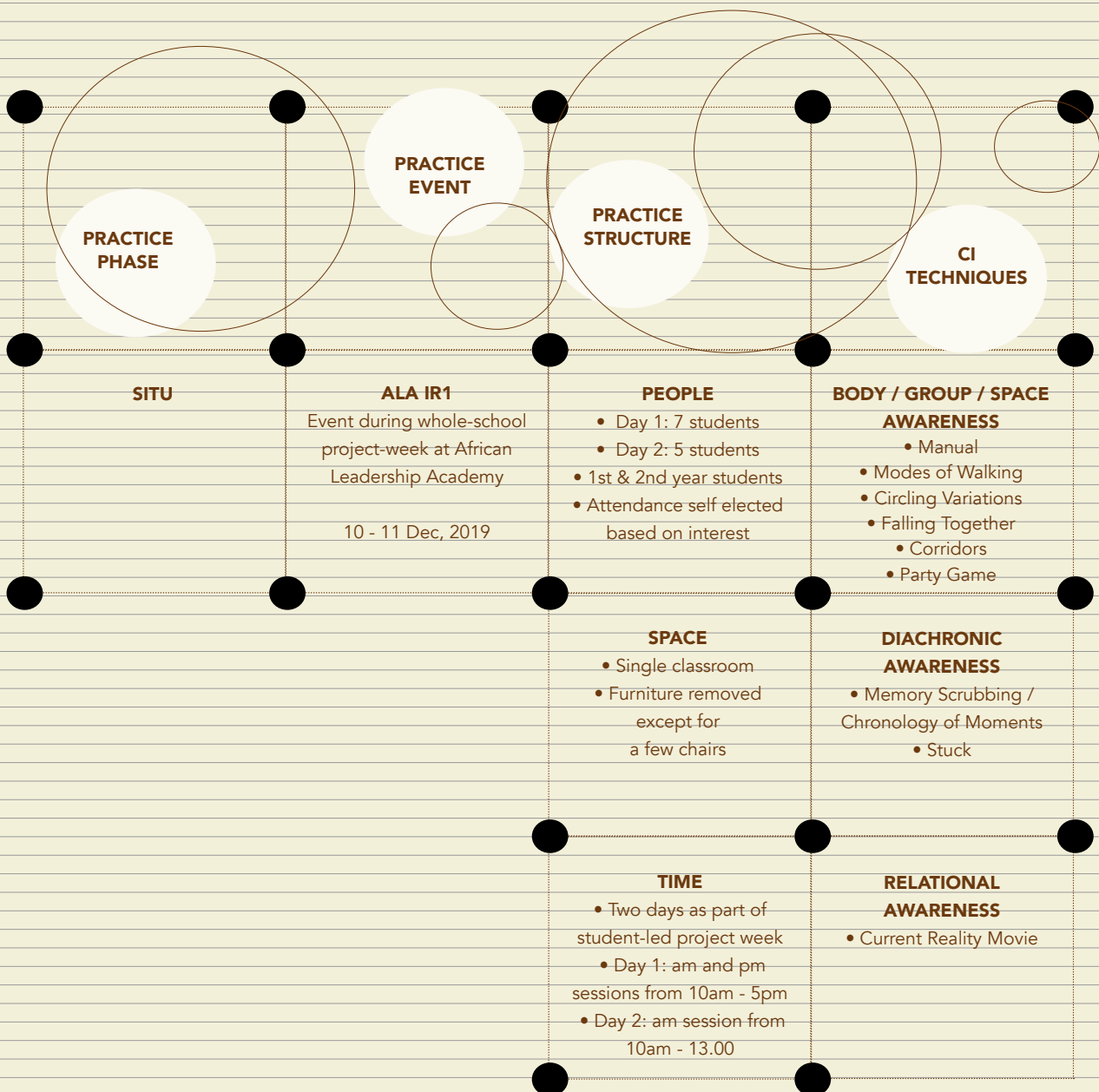


Table A3.1 SITU African Leadership Academy_IR1

Event description: SITU ALA_IR1

The first two-day pilot event took place during the school-wide *Do Something Cool* (DSC) project-week, where students build skills and pursue interests through workshops and self-directed learning. Students were informed about my practice-event through information shared by Entrepreneurial Leadership faculty, the project-week coordinator, and posters in communal spaces.¹ With multiple activities on offer during the DSC week, and to encourage commitment to attend both days, the DSC coordinator asked students to sign up via a short statement of interest. On the first morning, the four students arrived, with three more joining later. In the afternoon, three students attended while others returned to their other project responsibilities. This attendance pattern aligned with the project-week ethos of self-determined learning. Students joining at different times required some additional time for integration, but did not significantly disrupt delivery. The relaxed atmosphere of project week (fig A4.1) saw non-participating students occasionally dropping in. Maintaining provisionality and openness to emergence — as practice-research strategy — helped mitigate disruption.

The rehearsal took place in a cleared classroom, with a few chairs and a table for consent forms, alongside video and audio equipment to document activities. **Day one** introduced students to body-led relational learning through *Itinerant Rehearsal* (IR) and selected *Collaborative Improvisation* (CI) techniques from the Body / Group / Space and Temporal Awareness groupings, interspersed with *Diffraction Dialogues* (DD). **Day two** was planned to rehearse techniques from the Relational Awareness grouping, with the students co-deciding a theme for enquiry. An unexpected element shaped both days, arising from the *undercommons* of project-week. One of the other project-week activities was hosted by the student-led AfroFem collective,² who staged an intervention on the meaning of 'consent' in sexual relationships through

¹ For more detail on access and consent arrangements, see Appendix B.

² The Afro-Fem collective was an initiative focussed on ending sexism and sexist exploitation and oppression across the African continent, established by a group of (mostly) female students as part of their Entrepreneurial Leadership project. Alongside setting up a stall in the student commons during the project-week with their charter, information about the issues, and a photography exhibition, the group also produced and sold related merchandise, and ran intervention activities.



Figure A3.1 *Opening the day in the student commons, with announcements by one of the students, no uniforms and group dancing, showing the relaxed atmosphere during the project-week.*

comment boards in the student commons (fig A3.2 & A3.4). They also posted printouts of text messages and statements around campus highlighting alleged exploitative language and harassment by ALA boys (fig A3.3). As an onto-epistemic challenge to sexism and gender-based violence locally and more broadly,³ the AfroFem collective was seeking a mandate for change. This atmosphere inevitably filtered into our rehearsal, surfacing in discussions on body-led relational learning and shaping the contextual theme of day two.

³ Sexism, gender based violence (GBV) and femicide is a prominent and perennial issue in Africa, with incidents in South Africa among the highest in the world according to the South African Department of Statistics. https://www.parliament.gov.za/storage/app/media/1_Stock/Events_Institutional/2020/womens_charter_2020/docs/30-07-2020/A_Statistical_Overview_R_Maluleke.pdf

Day 1: Rehearsing the techniques

The first day began with an introduction to the research themes and objectives. Students were invited to co-create knowledge by sharing their experiences of body-led relational learning during rehearsal and group dialogues. Six techniques were introduced in the morning and two in the afternoon. We opened with *Manual* (fig A3.5) and *Modes of Walking* (fig A3.6) to initiate moving together and to begin observing sensations and relationships within our bodies, with others, and the space. We continued with *Circling Variations* and *Falling Together*, illustrating alignment between one's own movement as individual body, and moving together as a group body. As in the PROTO rehearsals, using a choreographic scaffold and open-ended verbal prompts allowed practice to unfold without directing students' movement choices. In working towards synchronising our circling and falling without talking, the techniques revealed moments of relational proprioception, with expanded awareness of self, other, and environment (fig A3.7). The group also experienced moments of constructive ambivalence, as shifting group dynamics required ongoing individual adjustment to find new alignments (fig A3.8). This 'not knowing what to do' is often a reason people avoid improvisation. However, the low-stakes playful nature of the techniques prompted one student to describe 'experiencing joy' in the 'shared uncertainty' of no one and everyone being responsible for group movement. This is an example of coming to know through doing and bodied co-creation of knowledge. By attending to collective movement, staying with ambivalence, and allowing an impetus for correspondence to build and be expressed, a new *collective known* could emerge.

With AfroFem's provocations on consent as undercurrent, *Corridors* (figs A3.9 -11) and *Party Game* (fig A3.12) elicited strong experiences and lively dialogue on connecting with others and recognising boundaries — within oneself and others. The *Corridors* technique included four rounds; the last involving placing a hand on one's partner.⁴ Students observed differences in the roles of

⁴ In introducing this round, I make a point of asking permission from the group for this moment of touch, empowering anyone who feels uncomfortable to step out and take on an active observer role. I further make suggestions for suitable places to touch, such as on the shoulder or arm.

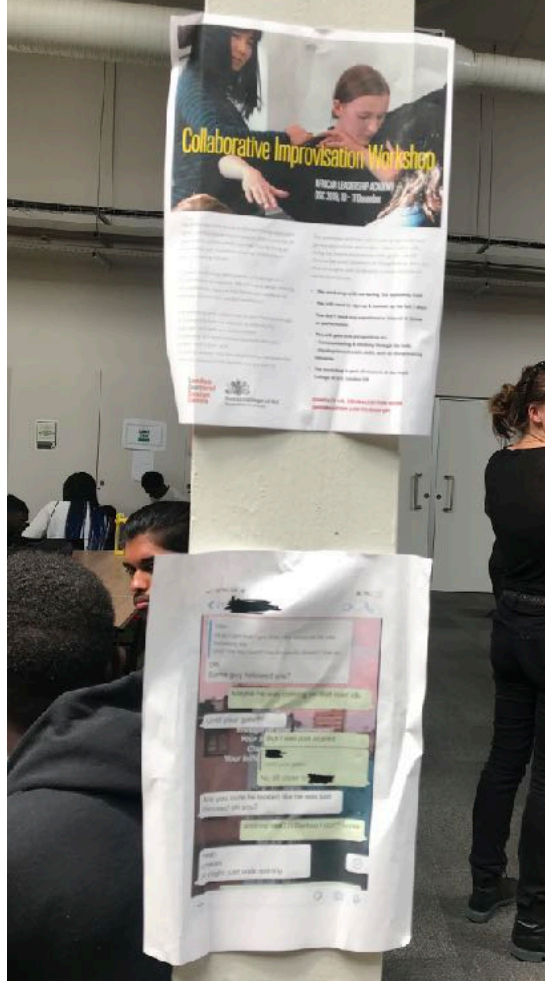


Figure A3.3 (above) Poster for the practice-event in the student commons, alongside AfroFem printouts of text messages and statements.

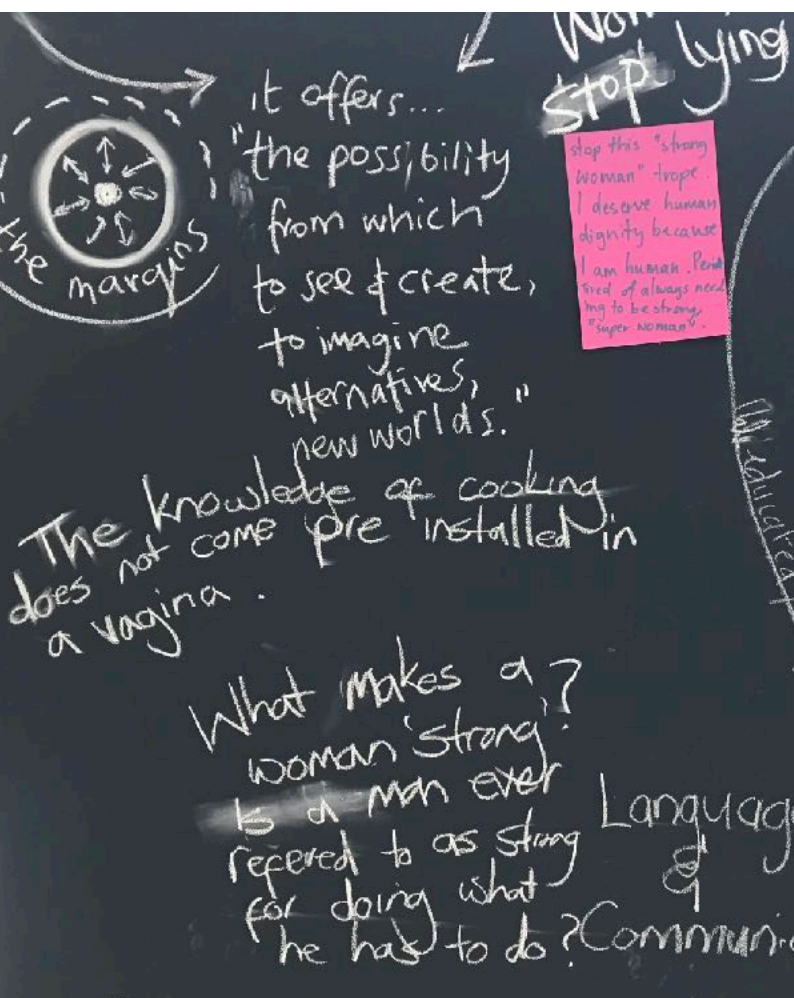


Figure A3.4 (left) Intervention by AfroFem in the student commons, inviting comments on the topic of consent.

Figure A3.5 *The students rehearsing the Manual technique.*



Figure A3.6 *Observing relationship between self, other and environment at different paces during the Modes of Walking technique.*



Figure A3.7 Relational proprioception in action during the *Falling Together* technique.



Figure A3.8 A moment of constructive ambivalence during the *Circling Together* technique





Figure A3.10 (right)
Two male students staying in confrontational eye contact after others have moved on in the eye contact round of Corridors.

Figure A3.9 (from left to right)

The Corridors technique cycling through four rounds: pass by / stop and notice / eye contact / touch.



Figure A3.11 (above)

In the final round of Corridors, partners exchange a moment touch.



touching and receiving touch. They noticed how eye contact and touch can open additional intimacy. Some forms of touch were seen as more socially acceptable, like touching someone's shoulder, while other touch depend on shared negotiation, as is the case between friends or partners.

Student 1: 'Maybe if it is something you agree to. If somebody is like a stranger, you would not want to go beyond their guard'.

There was recognition that perceptions of social or individual agreement differ between people and circumstances, with cultural and power dynamics identified as influencing such agreements.

Student 3: 'Usually it is socially acceptable to touch someone's shoulder.'

Student 4: 'I don't know. I felt a bit awkward first of all, looking you in the eyes with my hand on your shoulder.'

This opened discussion on how agreement might be negotiated individually and collectively, with awareness that physical and social boundaries might vary, and attending to bodily sensations as a signal when a boundary is crossed.

Student 5: 'Your body feels it when it does not feel quite right. And you might think, I don't want that. Or you might feel that it is ok, or you like it.'



Figure A3.12 (left) The two phases of the Party Game technique (verbal and non-verbal), followed by group dialogue.

The group observed that acknowledging the power of touch can support the formation of trust, new connections, and openness. *Corridors* offered a safe container to explore bodied boundaries and interactions, and insights through body-led relational learning opened engagement with the contextual challenges raised by AfroFem. It also widened awareness of the onto-epistemic shifts needed to address the larger harms of gender-based violence and sexist behaviour.

Next, we rehearsed the *Party Game* in two rounds. Students noted temporal differences in the contrast between the speech and eye contact rounds:

Student 3: *'In the first round, when you have to tell them about yourself in one minute, it was nice and you can talk and one minute goes by fast. And then it was like, [be with them for] one minute with just eye contact... and this minute is like very long.'*

Student 6: *'I think words, like, although sometimes you cannot convey exactly what you mean through words, they are a little more definite than, like, eye contact. I think eye contact is a very ambiguous form of communication. It can mean many things, and I think because of how ambiguous it is, it creates a tension that neither party can explain.'*

We turned our attention to this ambiguous realm where time slows, yet so much seems to be happening. Discussion turned to how we overlay uncertainty with

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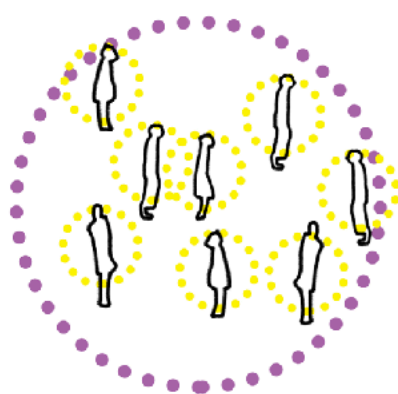


Figure A3.13 (above & right)
Diagrams used to introduce and illustrate notions of individual/group/contextual body, the temporal, and relational.

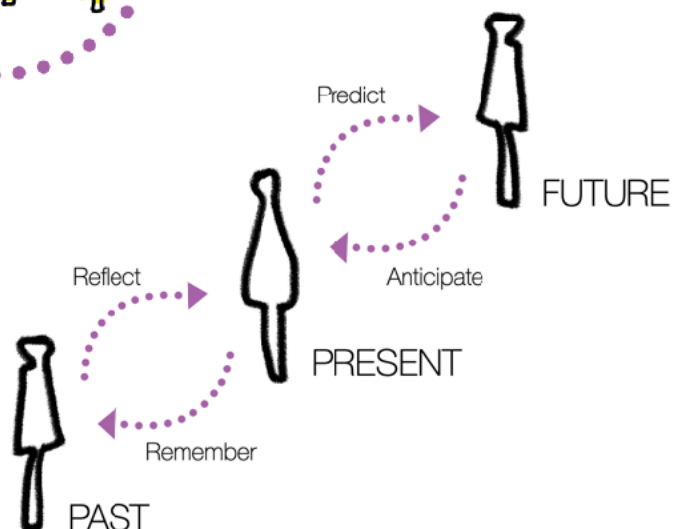


Figure A3.14 (below) Student re-animating a bodied memory using the Memory Scrubbing technique.

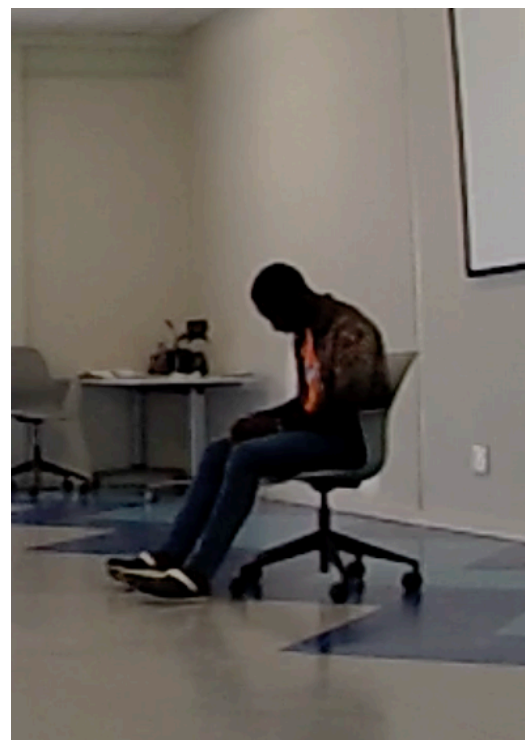




Figure A3.15 (above) Two examples of the group iteration of the Stuck technique, with current reality (left) and emerging reality (right).

talking and laughter to be convivial, to cover discomfort, or avoid being seen, and what it might mean to allow ourselves to be seen. We touched on what is regarded as ‘acceptable’ in social life and how it can direct our actions.

Student 1: *‘What I learned from observing these [techniques]... I find it really interesting how we attach comfort with certain behaviours and certain things, with what is accepted around us’.*

To close the morning, I introduced the theme of individual, group, and contextual body, using examples from our rehearsal and dialogues to illustrate the body-led and relational learning that has emerged.

In the afternoon, I introduced notions of the temporal and relational (fig A3.13) as a primer for *Memory Scrubbing / Chronology of Moments* (fig A3.14)⁵ and *Stuck* (fig A3.15).⁶ For both techniques, students selected personal themes for exploration. In *Memory Scrubbing*, they identified, bracketed, and re-animated strong-bodied memories by repeating associated movements. After solo practice, we diffractively shared sensations and revelations from our practice; relationships between past and present; and differences between bodied and cognitive-led reflection. Students noted similarities between these tasks and the written reflection assignments in their ALA coursework, which they both found challenging. Referring to *Memory Scrubbing* as bodied coming-to-know, a student shared:

Student 2: ‘...feels like I have caught up on a process of transitioning from me being in that [past] state. There are other kinds of information, and it is like I am more in control of that.’

We concluded that reconnecting with the past and observing its ties to the present and future can be difficult but valuable relational work. With the *Stuck* technique, we conducted individual exploration of personal ‘stuck’ postures, then shared ‘I saw or felt’ statements to avoid indulging in overt interpretation. Next, we explored each ‘stuck’ posture collectively. Students were invited to attend to when the posture became unsustainable and a new direction or movement began to emerge. In diffractive dialogue, we asked: ‘Where did the movement begin?’ and ‘What did I come to know in Sculpture 2?’ We considered the temporal dimension of this technique, relating from present to future, and foreshadowed extending this exploration from an individual to a situational ‘stuck’ in *4D Mapping* the next day.

⁵ Attending to the relationship between the past and present.

⁶ Attending to the relationship between the present and future.

Day 2: Rehearsing the techniques

On arrival, I was informed by a staff member that an incident⁷ the previous evening had greatly reduced student numbers at project-week activities. Two students from the previous day returned,⁸ joined by two new students. Energy and morale were low, but opening with Menu of Pedestrian Movement was effective in getting students moving and introduced a movement vocabulary for Village and 4D Mapping. After briefly recapping research themes for the new students, a teacher announced that project week would end early to accommodate a whole-school assembly called to address the prior night's events. With the afternoon cut short, I revised the plan and began with Current Reality Movie, the most meaningful and manageable option in the time. As the technique requires a contextual topic, students suggested we engage the current campus issue. After introducing the technique's operation and objectives, we discussed possible primary stakeholder roles.⁹ During the mid-morning break, students collected anonymous one-line statements from willing peers perceived to be in those roles. On return, the written quotes were paired with stakeholder role sheets (fig A3.19). Five statements were collected for 'female student' roles; one for 'the accused'; and one for a 'male student'. The group took turns selecting a role, positioning it in the field, and stepping into the role to read the quote and embody it through gesture or posture. Though tentative and modest, the gestures were clear enough to elicit recognition from the group, who responded with nods and verbal acknowledgement. Once all quotes had been expressed, we widened the field by adding absent voices: 'faculty', 'female faculty', 'pro-feminist boys', and 'parents'. We then considered the relationships among the position sheets, noting location, proximity, and direction. This revealed three groupings of 'female students'. Firstly, a central

⁷ Sparked by the provocations of the AfroFem collective, confrontations had erupted between accusers and accused, with some students awake late into the night in the residences. With little sleep and emotions running high, the ripple effect in the student community drew focus away from DSC project-week activities.

⁸ Another came to say she could only attend in the afternoon due to other engagements.

⁹ The students identified 'female students', 'male students', and 'the accused'.



Figure A3.16 (below) A student reads a quote gathered from a stakeholder, before positioning and embodying the role in the field in relation to other stakeholders.

Figure A3.17 (above & right) Students stepping into stakeholder roles and creating a bodied response. (left): Pro-feminist men role gesturing towards male student and accused with pointed finger and open hand towards female students. (right): Faculty role gesturing pressing down with both hands.



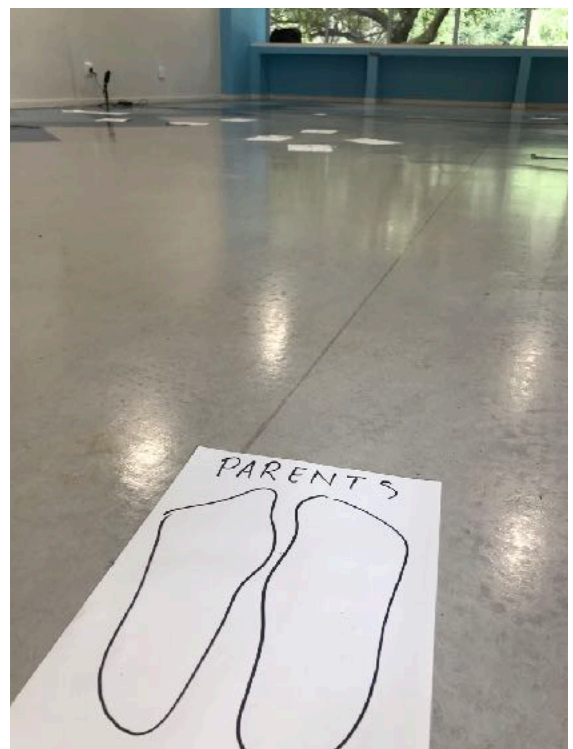
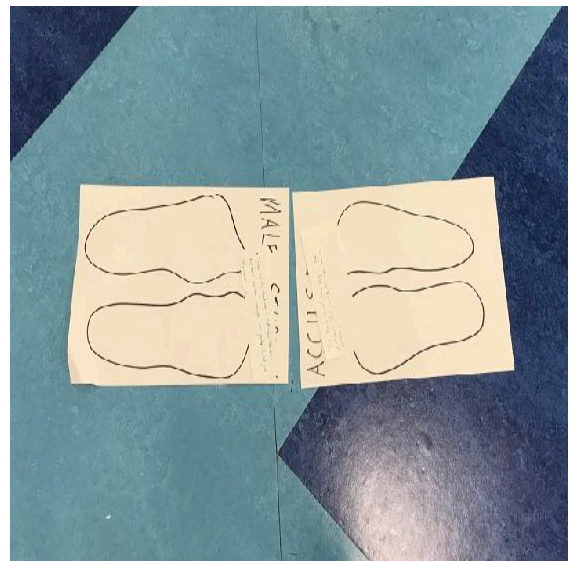
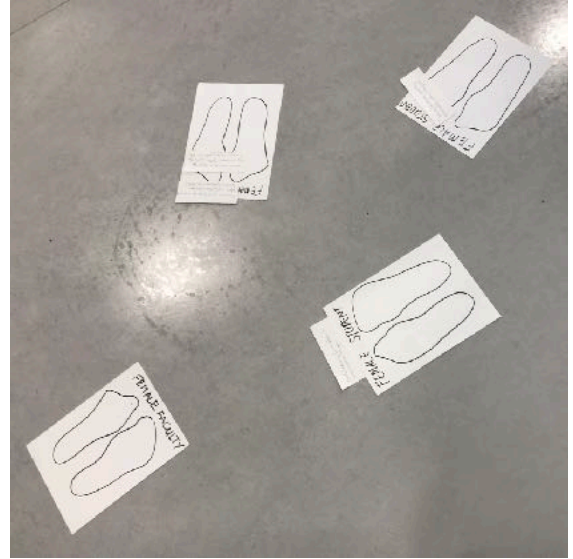


Figure A3.18 (right) Stakeholders as positioned in the field by students: Female students facing a female faculty member (top); the accused and another male student facing each other (middle); parents at a distance from the situation (bottom).

cluster of three facing the 'female faculty' (fig A3.18); and one isolated on the periphery, described as a voice not heard or unwilling to participate.

Student 1: 'Some voices are not really heard. Take, for instance, such a student. This kind of idea that 'I am part of the group, but I don't consider the [AfroFem intervention] effective. So I am not going to listen to it, or try to build something from it'.'

In contrast, the remaining 'female student' role was positioned in direct engagement with 'pro-feminist men', in closer proximity to the 'male student' and 'accused', who faced each other. The 'parents' role was placed far away. In reflecting on what surprised them, students shared what they came to know about the situated issue through this practice:

Student 2: '...there are so many divisions, and there is no real ... kind of ... initiative that is being taken by all of the groups to come up with a basic solution, or like reach a conclusion that can bring about a solution.'

Student 3: 'I felt it was... that there is a lot that one has to learn about the situation before you can understand. And that this is something everyone outside of this [rehearsal] should begin with.'

In discussing the technique, a student noted that mapping insights this way could still be biased¹⁰ and subjective. We considered how *Current Reality Movie* enabled shared observation of one possible representation of the situation, as a way to dynamically open the issue, and how non-verbal embodiment of stakeholders brought qualities absent in discussion, where thoughts, words, or blame might dominate. Body-led relational learning as collective enquiry had begun infrastructuring a different way to approach the issue.

¹⁰ For example, due to the heavy representation of the 'female student' voice in the quotes.



Figure A3.19 Three of the quotes collected by the students.

Student 2: 'I just wanted to say that everything was really important to me. I was even thinking how I can convince people to actually use this. This really helped me... and yesterday's session helped me to really see things. See about things and not just think about it. Because sometimes when you think about it, it gets confusing, and you just get stuck. With the Stuck activity yesterday, I could really **SEE**. I could see ways of coming out of my confusion about my issue.'

With the early closure of the project week, we concluded with a brief discussion on how *4D Mapping* extends this form of body-led relational learning for contextual issues. This concluded the first practice-event with ALA.

DIFFRACTIVE READING: Current Reality Movie, the Undercommons, Study, & Sanctuary

The body-led relational learning space, as manifested by the *Current Reality Movie* technique in this context, resonates with the co-concepts of the *undercommons*, *study*, and the *minor*, as well as *sanctuary* introduced in *Chapter 3*. A school-sanctioned provocation on the theme of consent, staged by the Afrofem collective in the communal Student Commons space, deteriorated overnight as institutional authority became diffuse and the *undercommons*¹¹ more animated. The next morning, many members of the student body avoided the *tense interface* presented by the *pluriversal contact zones*¹² of the school's common spaces by staying in their rooms. The students who did show up for our rehearsal did not come to claim sanctuary, but to *make sanctuary*.¹³ They opted to *congregate around and nurture the monstrous* — to *stay with what wanted to be put aside*.¹⁴ By stepping into the footprints of their identified stakeholders — as relational rather than abstract others — and embodying their roles, the students opted to *disturb their own categoricity*¹⁵ by showing up to *meet the failure of our ways of being allies* in situations of crises.¹⁶ CRM provided a 'modest material semiotic practice' for entry into a space of *study*,¹⁷ as an act of *response-ability* for the *minor*.¹⁸

¹¹ Harney & Moten, 2013.

¹² de la Cadena & Escobar, 2023; Escobar, Osterweil, & Sharma, 2024.

¹³ Akomolafe, 2025a.

¹⁴ Akomolafe, 2024.

¹⁵ Akomolafe, 2021.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Harney & Moten, 2013.

¹⁸ Manning, 2016.

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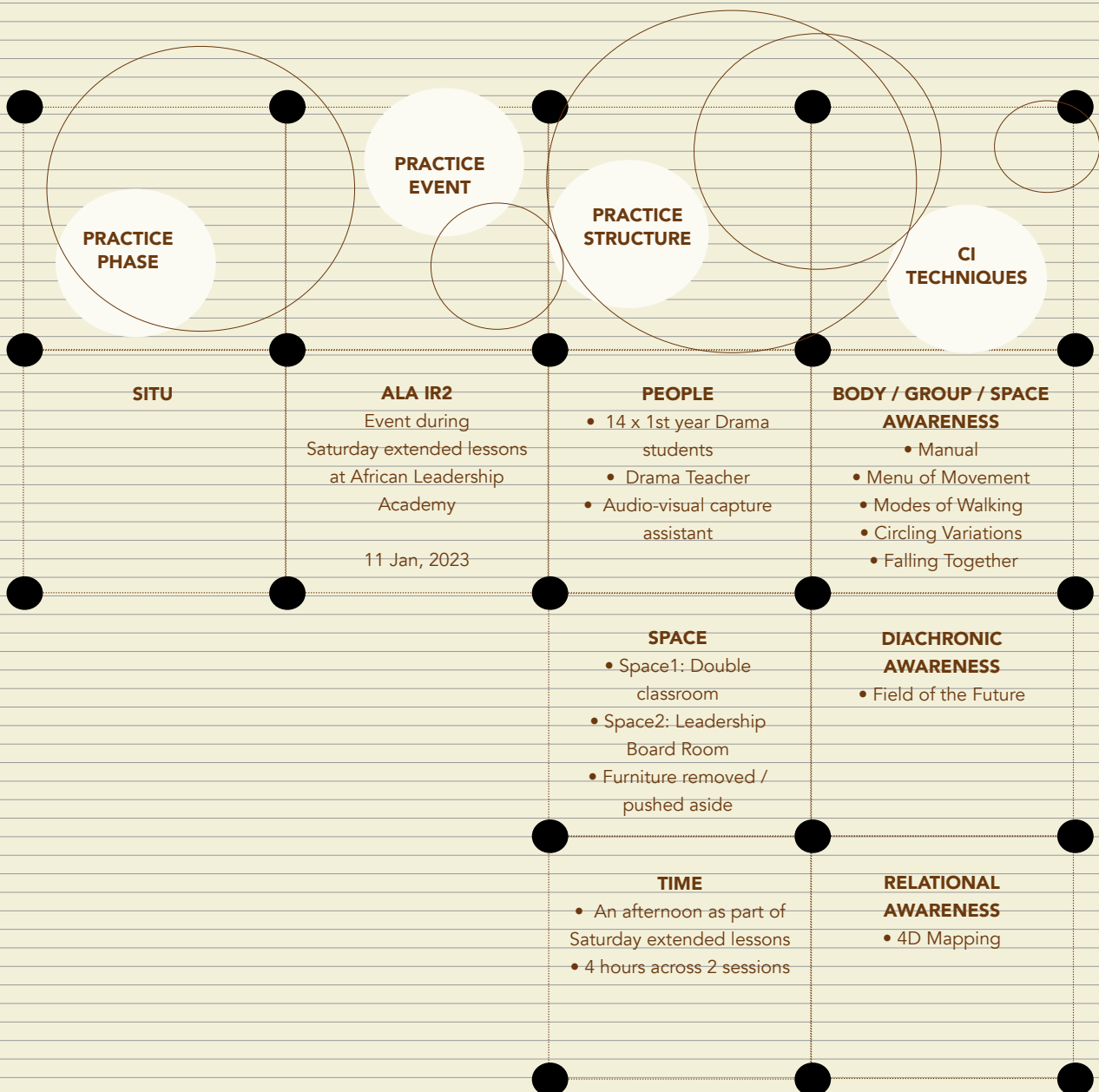


Table A3.2 SITU African Leadership Academy_IR2

Event description: SITU ALA_IR2

The second practice-event with ALA was the final event of the SITU practice phase. It took place three years after the initial ALA rehearsal with a new cohort of students.¹⁹ Learnings from previous practice-events at both ALA and AC²⁰ fed into the design for this final rehearsal. It was hosted as a dedicated half-day session with a cohort of first-year drama students during their normal Saturday lessons.²¹ Information about the event was communicated to students via the Head of Department for Creative Arts, who was also the drama teacher. The group included 13 drama students and one other student who had requested to participate. The teacher joined in some of the activities. The rehearsal took place in a ground-floor double classroom opening up onto a courtyard, cleared other than a table and recording equipment. Students arrived for the first session with high levels of enthusiasm and energy, despite being required to attend as part of their weekend timetable and having been out late the previous evening at a theatre performance in Johannesburg. It was the first time I met the students, and we talked informally for a while to get to know each other. I set out the research context and structure for the rehearsal, and encouraged students to freely share their experiences and insights throughout our time together. The ***first session*** included two stages: starting with an introduction to a selection of *Body / Group / Space Awareness* techniques, interspersed with short post-practice dialogues and a longer diffractive dialogue to conclude; followed by one technique from the *Temporal Awareness* grouping and a further diffractive dialogue. The ***second session*** was dedicated to the *4D Mapping* technique from the *Relational Awareness* grouping, closing with a final diffractive dialogue.

¹⁹ Once I was able to access the school after the Coronavirus pandemic

²⁰ See *Chapter 5* and *Practice Document 4* on the practice-events with Atlantic College (AC).

²¹ For detail on access and consent arrangements, see Appendix B.



Figure A3.20 *The ALA drama cohort puzzling over how to get their peers to stand in the Manual technique.*

First session: Rehearsing the techniques

We opened with *Manual* (fig A3.20). Students found the activity fun yet challenging, surprised by the many movements involved in standing up. We discussed how we automate daily movements for functionality, but how this can reduce our attention to the knowledge we hold and develop through our moving bodies. Next came *Modes of Walking* (fig A3.21). Verbal prompts encouraged the group to explore relationalities of pace, location, and space.²² Interspersing movement with stillness, we explored moments *before and after* (fig A3.22) in preparation for the *Temporal Awareness* technique, *Field of the Future*. Students were asked to notice differences between the bodied know-how used in recounting the moment just past and rehearsing the future moment, and to identify where in the body that knowledge was located. Keeping our walking momentum, we flowed into *Circling Variations* (fig A3.23) as an experience of individual and group body, experimenting with proposing movements to the group body. In

²² For example, increasing one's pace from walking to running across a room moves you from one side to the other more quickly. Reaching the opposite end of the room more quickly requires you attend and react to the limitations and opportunities of the space by changing your pace or redirecting your movement.



Figure A3.21 *Exploration of location, pace, and space during Modes of Walking.*

Falling Together (fig A3.24), synchrony across the whole group proved difficult, seemingly due to the challenge of attending to a larger group. A student suggested synchronising smaller groups, then bringing them together. When a group body is in motion, the demand on the individual to attend and respond is heightened. Individual and shared ambiguity invite provisional action. Through repeated provisional actions, calibration occurs between individual, group, and context — manifesting as a process of collective infrastructuring of group movement. Disentangling the experience, a student noted the contrast between falling and synchronising:

Figure A3.22 *Students exploring the moment before and moment after a still point.*

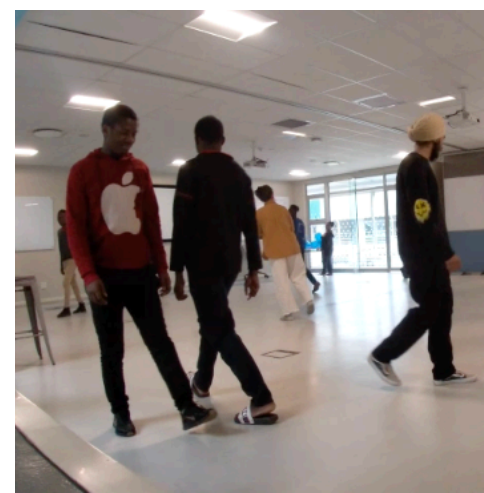






Figure A3.23 (left) *Students experimenting with proposing movements to the group body in the Circling Variations technique.*

Figure A3.24 (above) *The larger group made Falling Together in synchrony challenging to achieve.*

Student 1: ‘...because we were talking about the group body, there was a sort of contradiction I was noticing. When we save ourselves from falling ... that stopping ourselves from falling was not really conscious. The body does not want us to fall. So, there is another part of us, like, of the body that was working there, as opposed to just us taking action.

Noticing sensory differences in the individual, group, and contextual body, and how these manifest relationally, informed another layer of learning. In *Menu of Pedestrian Movement* (fig A3.25),²³ students observed further dynamics of movement.²⁴ Their response was lively and playful.

Student 2: ‘Like it was interesting observing all the ways your body can move. Because you told us ‘go low’ and then ‘pace’, so I’m like ‘ok, I’m down here, and I have to figure out how to move now and then

²³ Also acting as preparation for *4D Mapping*.

²⁴ We started by each moving to an unfamiliar location in the room, then changing to a ‘fresh space’; changing direction in that space; changing direction and moving to another location; adjusting level in the space; adjusting proximity (to others / contextual factors); varying pace; and attending to the gaze.



Figure A3.25 Two moments during the Menu of Pedestrian Movement exploration.

*I was moving my body in ways that I am not used to moving it.
And there was something so fun and so freeing about that. I was like:
‘Oh my god, I can actually move in different ways!’.*

The teacher observed that the group’s tendency toward habituated movement and dualities²⁵ was disrupted by the technique. We revisited insights from *Manual* on how automated and habitualised movement structures daily being and doing, and how, if it serves to ‘guard and keep’²⁶ limiting conditions, it can become stagnant or oppressive. We touched on how responding to what is needed in a situation requires relational attention across individual, group, and contextual body. These initial techniques built ease and widened awareness of coming-to-know through the body, as well as provisional and distributed emergence.

***Student 3: ‘Now I have a lot more awareness about everything
that happens around me. Especially with the group body activity.’***

After a break, we explored the *Field of the Future* technique (fig A3.26). To frame the practice, we examined the importance of maintaining open and plural futures, and the notion of anticipation as attending to the present from the future. In *Field of the Future*, we attend to bodily stimuli to direct physical movements through imagined time periods. The group was asked to find individual spaces in the room. With prompts, they reflected on their current reality or *close present*: the people, places, and activities of their lives. This was followed by stepping into a near future and then a distant future of their own speculative fabulation. Time was spent in each temporal location clarifying circumstances through thought, posture, and gesture.²⁷ From the distant future position, the group was prompted to turn back

²⁵ For example, with the ‘proximity’ prompt tending to come closer together rather than equidistant or further apart.

²⁶ In reference to a quote from James Baldwin: ‘Most people guard and keep; they suppose that it is they themselves ... that they are guarding and keeping, whereas ... what they are actually guarding and keeping is their system of reality and what they assume themselves to be’. p85. Baldwin, J. 1992. *The Fire Next Time*. Reissue edition. New York: Vintage.

²⁷ For example, choosing height, direction, bodily postures and gestures expressing the experience of that locale.



Figure A3.26 Looking towards the near and mid future and turning to face the present in *Field of the Future*.

toward their starting positions and observe themselves in that *past-present* reality. As they returned slowly, one student stood still and said he did not want to go back. The diffractive dialogue revealed that students deeply engaged with this technique. We explored what they learned from their journey, noting that personal details did not have to be shared unless they wanted to. As with *Stuck*, the option to explore personal conditions with others without disclosing personal circumstances proved powerful and freeing. Some expressed enjoyment:

Student 2: *'I think it was pretty cool becoming that future me. Because at first I was like, 'no, nothing is happening. I am just imagining things'. Until you said, like, turn around and see the person who was there. And I was like 'Why does it feel like such a different person'... I felt like I was stepping into a future and when I looked back, it was like... there she is!!'*
[referring to 'seeing' her 'present' self]

Teacher: *'When you said imagine this future, I switched into this dreamer mode. What is the ideal future... There are loads of options. And it was quite a euphoric experience, actually. I definitely felt a sense of euphoria imagining this world and what it would look like, and that was quite freeing.'*

Others found it harder to imagine or settle on a particular future:

Student 4: *'I didn't move much because I couldn't really imagine my future. Because somehow, I couldn't separate myself right now from the future. And when I was thinking about the future, I could not think about the far future, like after five or six years. Because for me, like, I need evidence or something that tells me this future is going to happen. I couldn't actually imagine it. I imagined, like, different kinds of scenarios for my future. Because I wasn't sure of any of it, I didn't move that much.'*

We discussed how attending to sensations in the body could intuit starting points for exploration, and how recognising bodily signals as valid information may require a shift in orientation. Several students noted the poignancy of turning and seeing their present selves. Returning from preferred futures provided varied insights into bodied knowing:

Student 4: *'For me, there was a discovery that came in the discomfort of having to go back. As a movement, it was very kind of disheartening. Because I was in a better position, and now I had to return to my earlier position. The difference in the two positions... the posture I had when I had moved... was more confident; I was upright, I had my hands free. As opposed to when I was on the floor, and I had to hold onto my legs. I was in a really sort of submissive position. The difference between those two is what actually was very daunting, to kind of retract towards, to go back to.'*

Shared learning arising from the diffractive dialogue included compassion for oneself in attempting to manifest in the world, and recognition of the power of starting places as springboards into the future. Some students did not want to return, while others were relieved to come back to their current selves.

Student 5: *'...the more I started to think about it, the more I started to freak out. Once you are out of here, you go to college; when you are out of college, you have to look for a job, you have to start to pay taxes [group laughs]... so when I got back into the [present] position, I was a little bit relieved!'*

Another student noticed the difficulty of holding on to their prefigured future after returning:

Student 6: *'I came back and I could not see that future anymore. I don't know why. If I want to go back to that future again, I would need to rethink or rebuild it from the present again.'*



Figure A3.27 *Diffraction dialogue after the initial techniques.*

This prompted reflections on how the future is not static, and how ideals must be grounded so they can seed and tend to so they can grow. We concluded that one's perspectives will always require adjustment along the way; that futures need repeated rehydration. Overall, students found this technique impactful.

Student 7: *'That exercise has given me clarity... because you went into the future and you ended up thinking about the things that you are doing now'.*

Before a longer break, we discussed the objectives of *4D Mapping* for our second session. The teacher informed me she would not attend the afternoon due to other engagements.²⁸

²⁸ Indicating satisfaction with the ethical and student safety protocols I maintained.

DIFFRACTIVE READING: Field of the Future, Bodied Knowing, and Relationality

Field of the Future enhances attention to the fluidity of diachronic relationships in the coming-into-being of realities, acting as a form of ‘futures memory making’.²⁹ Time is, in many cultures, considered one-directional — moving only forward. The *Field of the Future* technique extends familiarity with this dominant directionality to examine multi-directional and non-linear conceptions of time and what this means for our ways of worlding. Opening us up to the spatiotemporal opportunities of relationality, this deceptively minimal technique acts as a space where multiplicity becomes possible by rendering ‘relations-between’ tangible.³⁰ Bringing the affordances of the body to this otherwise imaginal investigation attunes us to different ways of coming to know the future. Physically embodying imaginal futures brings the threefold body into play, inviting us to attune to the processual and dynamic interplay of relationality. Even on a basic level, physically stepping forward into a world of one’s own creation, or turning back towards one’s present state can be a deeply visceral experience — as substantiated by the strong reactions of the ALA students. Describing body-led improvisational knowing, choreographer Deborah Hay invites us to regard going to a place we don’t know as *the* place of coming to know.³¹ Echoing this, choreographer Matthias Sperling considers bodied improvisation a form of provisional enquiry, generating emergent compositions that ‘continually negotiate the meeting of plural pasts and presents’.³²

²⁹ Kambunga, A.P., Smith, R.C., Winschiers-Theophilus, H. 2024. Extending temporalities in design: designing pluriversal futures. *CoDesign* 1–19.

³⁰ Massey, 2005.

³¹ Hay, D. 2021. Deborah Hay Now. [Keynote]. As part of Down to RAW. Hosted by Independent Dance at Siobhan Davies Studios.

³² In speaking about his improvisational framework *For Now* — which operates on similar provisional principles to *Field of the Future*. Sperling, M. 2018. On the body as an archive in *Table of Contents*. [Panel discussion]. Whitechapel Gallery, London.

Second session: Rehearsing the techniques

On return, the group considered 'real world' issues for *4D Mapping* (fig A3.29). Students passionately proposed topics³³ and settled on whether the Arts, as a way of knowing, are valued at ALA. They felt Drama was seen as a lesser or 'easy' subject, with strong disciplinary hierarchies privileging STEM³⁴ through resources and status. They titled the investigation 'Death of the Arts'. Stakeholders identified included: Art Students; Art Teachers; Non-Art Students; Non-Art Teachers; University Guidance Counsellors; and Senior Management. Potential Art Students were allocated as the *Marginalised*; The *Highest Aspiration* was framed as a reality where all students can study the Arts, understood and valued for its epistemic and ontological affordances; The role of *Earth* was maintained as is: the environmental ground for all we do.³⁵ The *Citizens*'³⁶ role was defined as active observers vital for holding the practice container (fig A3.30). A scribe was allocated to log stakeholder statements for the current reality (*Sculpture1*) and emerging future (*Sculpture2*). Due to noise from an event in the nearby courtyard, we changed rooms, giving a fresh start for this more complex technique.³⁷

After introducing the stages of the technique, students embodied stakeholder roles, orienting the *current reality* of the topic as *Sculpture1* (fig A3.28). *Citizens* noted their observations using prompt sheets.³⁸ Verbal statements for *Sculpture1* were recorded (fig A3.32). Students sensed into the relationalities of their roles and the conditions represented in *Sculpture1*, from where contingent movements began tracing a route to the *emerging future* of

³³ Including corruption; climate change and related issues, such as air pollution; ableist systems; dictatorship; and issues of African diaspora.

³⁴ Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths.

³⁵ In Social Presencing Theatre, three divides are considered during *4D Mapping* to acknowledge the impact of Ecological (Earth), Social (Marginalised / Excluded), and Spiritual (Highest Aspiration) divides.

³⁶ Those not taking on stakeholder roles and seated around the edge of the field.

³⁷ The students identified the school boardroom and, with permission from a teacher, we pushed furniture to the sides to create space to practice. Some time was lost, but the students were focused and we got back on track easily.

³⁸ Prompts included: Where did the movement begin? Where did you notice a shift? How is *Sculpture 1* and *2* different? How does noticing this relate to the contextual situation / theme?

Sculpture2. Some movements led to giggling and loosening of the form. With small prompts to stay with the co-created scene, a first iteration of *Sculpture2* emerged, followed by a second formulation. Statements were then collected from each role, and the mapping closed with students stepping out of roles by placing their cards in the centre of the field.

In the group dialogue (fig A3.33), *Citizen* observers shared where they noticed movement starting between *Sculpture1* and *Sculpture2*, using *I saw* and *I sensed* statements.³⁹ They identified Non-Art Students reaching toward Art Students as the Non-Art Teacher stepped back to make space. To the group, this suggested creating conditions under which Non-Art Students and Non-Art Teachers might engage differently with the Arts. One student noted a relationship between *observed* and *portrayed*,⁴⁰ *imagined* and *emergent*⁴¹ realities, having noticed that *Sculpture1* was ‘not biased by the feelings of the people portraying [the roles]’ and he ‘could hardly tell [*Sculpture1*] from reality’, whereas *Sculpture2* was ‘more of people’s understanding than reality’ and ‘...the reality was generating from the imagination’. Acknowledging the multi-subjectivities involved, the group explored how *Sculpture2* emerged from the realities embodied in *Sculpture1*. We considered what was revealed by *Sculpture2* through body-led sensemaking rather than thought-led planning. *Sculpture2* is not a perfect future but an ontological prefiguration from where observations on the conditions and orientations constituting a potential emerging future, and its difference from current reality, can be made. The apparatus of *4D Mapping* requires a shift from

³⁹ When one of the students asked if it could be ‘I thought’, we discussed how using *I saw*, *I sensed*, and *I did* statements challenge thought-led interpretations, not because they do not have value, but to foreground other ways of knowing.

⁴⁰ For example, how the Senior Management role was *observed* as being distanced and turning a blind eye to issues of disciplinary hierarchies, and physically *portrayed* as standing separately with folded arms and turned away from the student and teacher roles in *Sculpture1*.

⁴¹ Several students reported on their process of sensing or imagining a movement and experiencing its meaning through enacting it. For example, the Non-Art Student, Non-Art-Teacher, and Art Student noted how they had felt a need for connection and responded by joining hands. By enacting the movement, propositions for the new reality of *Sculpture2* began to emerge.

imagination as hope⁴² or fabulation⁴³ toward *attention* as *response-ability* to remain with not-knowing and provisionality. From this position, familiar and conditioned onto-epistemic forms of organisation might be encountered, recognised and reiterated.

The potential of body-led relational learning, through techniques like *4D Mapping*, relies on the cultivation of bodied *sensing-into*, as means to detect non-alignment with conditioned forms and pursue tangible alterities. It involves attuning, through the affordances of the body,⁴⁴ to disregarded relationalities of the current reality. The group discussed the complexities of grounding emergent realities in current realities, where imagined solutions risk replicating legacy conditions. *Collaborative Improvisation* techniques can help subvert such circularities by moving beyond thought-based interpretations. One student noted that speaking from the body produced closer resonance with reality:

Student 8: ‘...the way when people speak from their body and connect to what they are saying... he said words, but I felt them and I was like yeah, I know what you are talking about’.

‘...it is a very realistic exercise, because it manages to widen our perspective ... I really like how realistic it was working with our bodies, instead of sitting around a table and saying this is what it should be like’.

Although students at times reverted to conceptual interpretations, with limited experience of bodied practice they expressed nascent learning about the bodied and relational affordances they observed:

⁴² Such as imagining a *better* or *perfect* future.

⁴³ Such as imagining a *fantastical* or *magical* future.

⁴⁴ Such as attending to conditions enactively presenting across the individual, group, and contextual body.

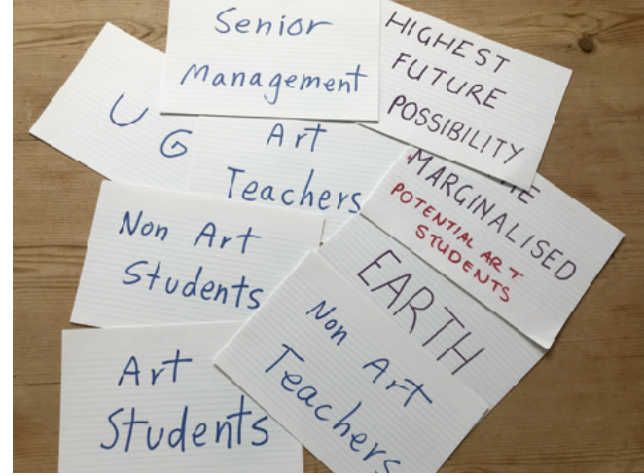


Figure A3.28 (below) Stakeholder roles distributed in the field enacting the current reality in Sculpture 1 (top); and Sculpture 2 (bottom) showing the intermediate development of an emerging reality.

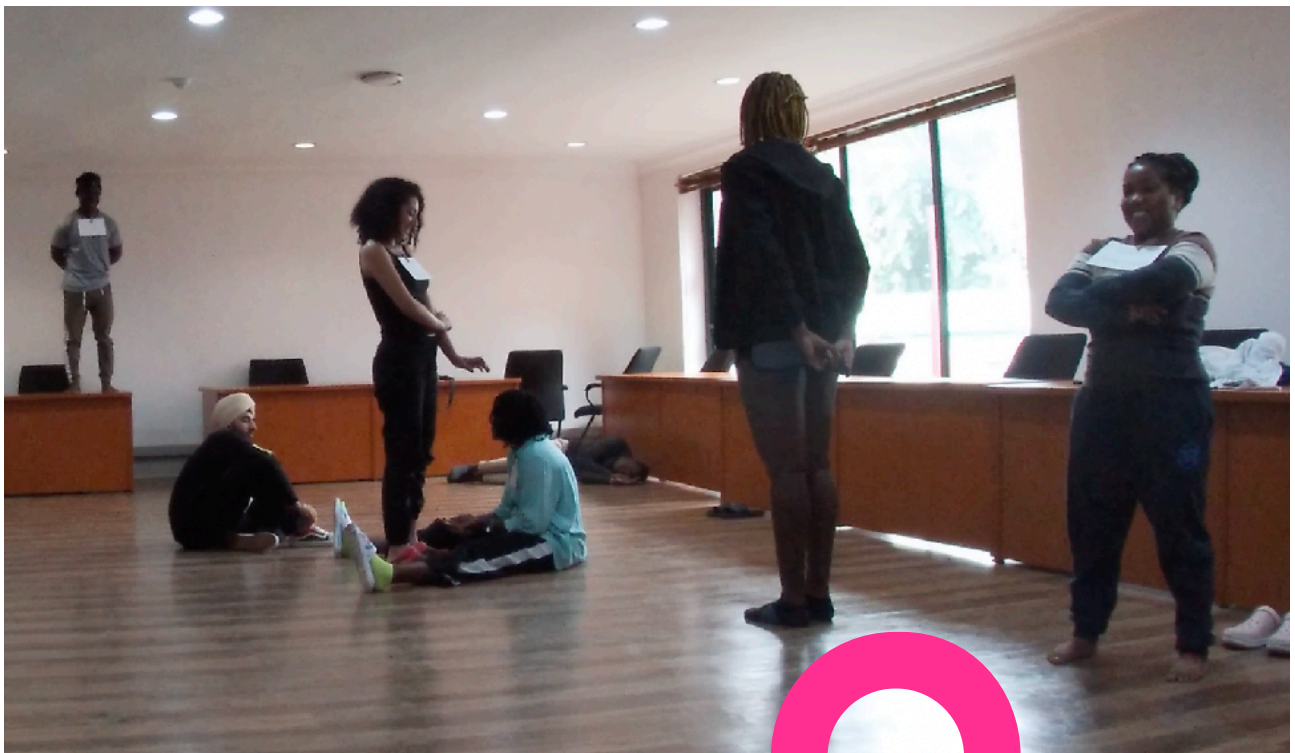


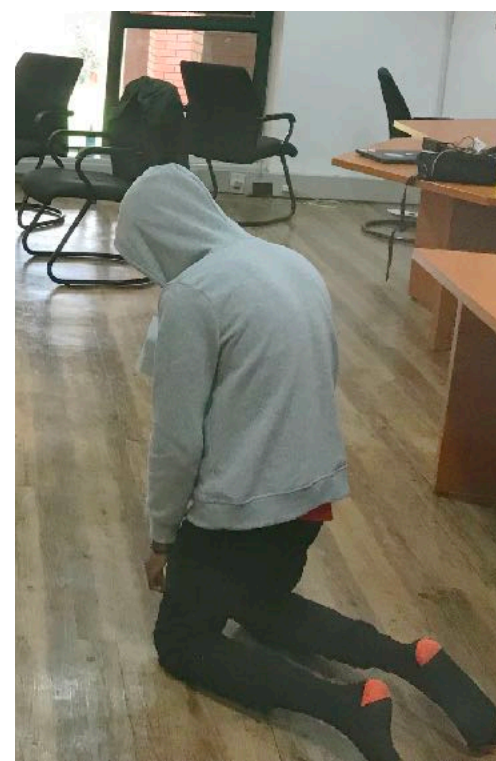
Figure A3.29 (left):
Introducing the operation
of 4D Mapping after the
group decided on the
theme and identifying
stakeholders in the issue.



Figure A3.30 (above): Citizens using prompt sheet to make notes
in response to the activity in the 4D Mapping field.



Figure A3.31 (above & right):
Expressions of the Highest Aspiration
role: (top left) the currently reality of
Sculpture1; (top right) outstretch
arms inviting engagement; (right) and
'hopeless' at the end of Sculpture2.



Student 3: *'Because we don't give our attention to details of our own bodies, we have actually solidified a way of organising ourselves. [Our body] kind of gives us details on how everything has its own meaning, and everything that we portrayed now [in the 4D Mapping] would be actually... it's kind of connected to us!'*

Student 4: *'When I think about today, it is the movement. Cause like, we are so used to always talking about the stuff, but today we have actually come to consider what does movement do, and how to connect in an embodied way. It was movement, but it was also building relationships. And there was something so intimate connecting in that way. Like actually connecting with your body and with who you are, rather than constantly thinking I should say this or do that'*

The event closed with students lingering to ask questions about applications for body-led relational learning and points of personal interest. This practice event took their experience as drama students in a new direction, with students excited to see how arts-based approaches might connect with other areas of their studies, such as their group projects in the entrepreneurial leadership module.

Post-Rehearsal Reflection: ALA_IR2

To allow students time to process the activities of the practice-event, written reflections were invited in response to three simple questions. A digital document with images and short descriptors of each technique rehearsed together was provided as an aide-mémoire. Eight out of the 14 students responded. Asked about *which technique they found most impactful*, *4D Mapping* and *Field of the Future* were rated highest. Asked *what they felt they had learned or become aware of through the practice*, students shared:

- '...that there is courage in walking together'
- 'We need to pay attention to our environment'
- '...makes me feel like group work is more powerful than individual work'
- 'To be aware of the space around me and the people in the space'

Role	Sculpture 1	Sculpture 2
Art Students	Judged Easy	United together
Non-Art Students	weak perception	powerful dignity
	Hard leave	respect valued Art
	travel easier	Drawing something
	Change important	together equal
		intersected growth
Senior Management	Follow authoritative rules	Managing well
	Power influence	Acceptance love
	Academics	human dignity
UG		Look at us how
Art Teachers	Unimportant passion	Appreciation
	Students fear	accepted
		motivated
Non Art teachers	Oppression	Understanding
	responsibility	defeated
		unconvinced
	tests assignments	Trying to bring back
	devaluing	the students
		to non-art subjects

Earth I have been forgotten, ignored, despite holding everything. I am able existence & yet they try to end my existence

The Marginalised Cold Skills
Importance Future

The highest Possible future Feel the light

It was performative only for a moment for Earth Day

Encourage acknowledge considered

Hopeless

Figure A3.32 (above) Statements from each stakeholder role for Sculpture1 and Sculpture2.



Figure A3.33 (left & below) Group dialogue after 4D Mapping.



- ‘The exercises have made me much more aware of my body, the way it moves, and the spaces around me, and the impact these two things have on the way I take in the world’
- ‘I really like the exercise of looking into the future, I even took the liberty of doing it [by myself]’
- ‘I have used, I think, three of those practices and they have been very helpful’

Asked about *potential applications they could see for the techniques*, students were less clear, offering different scenarios in school and broader contexts, such as ‘helping high school students consider their futures’, or as a means ‘to build empathy’ or to ‘reconsider what is possible’.

These written reflections, whilst not a formal means of evaluating body-led relational learning, contribute some insight into the ongoing impressions on the students more than a month after the practice-event. Further research through a longitudinal embedding of body-led relational learning and its interweaving with learning praxis in this or other communal learning settings could build on my nascent findings.