

Part of the furniture:

encountering people and  
sofas in the design studio





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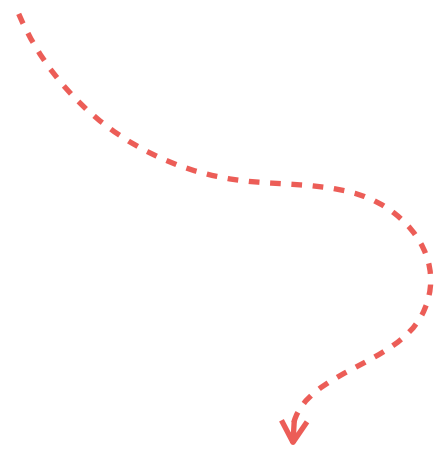




Mullaney & Rea (2022)



## *Sketchbook entry 2017*



A space [the studio] with many things becoming. Traces of work – the artefacts of learning – perhaps abandoned, half-finished or in progress, bean bags and a pair of sofas. A group of students sitting at tables working on laptops catch my attention. They are all wearing slippers. The floors are industrial-grade concrete, and perhaps this is a practical move. But slippers also suggest home, privacy, and domesticity, and in a large open, semi-public studio, they are slightly out of place. What are these slippers doing? Are they for comfort, speaking to what it means to put long hours in the studio, to commitment, to the performance of commitment perhaps? Or is this about familiarity and belonging? Or a sign of transgression?















Studio



Important and frustrating

Jones et al 2020

Studio



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‘Pedagogy is an inherently  
spatial practice’

Acton 2017:1441

Studio



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# Studio

The material space of the  
studio is rarely examined

Corazzo 2019



Important and frustrating

Jones et al 2020

‘Pedagogy is an inherently spatial practice’

Acton 2017:1441

# Studio

Educational research  
prioritises discourses

Newburn 2009

The material space of the  
studio is rarely examined

Corazzo 2019





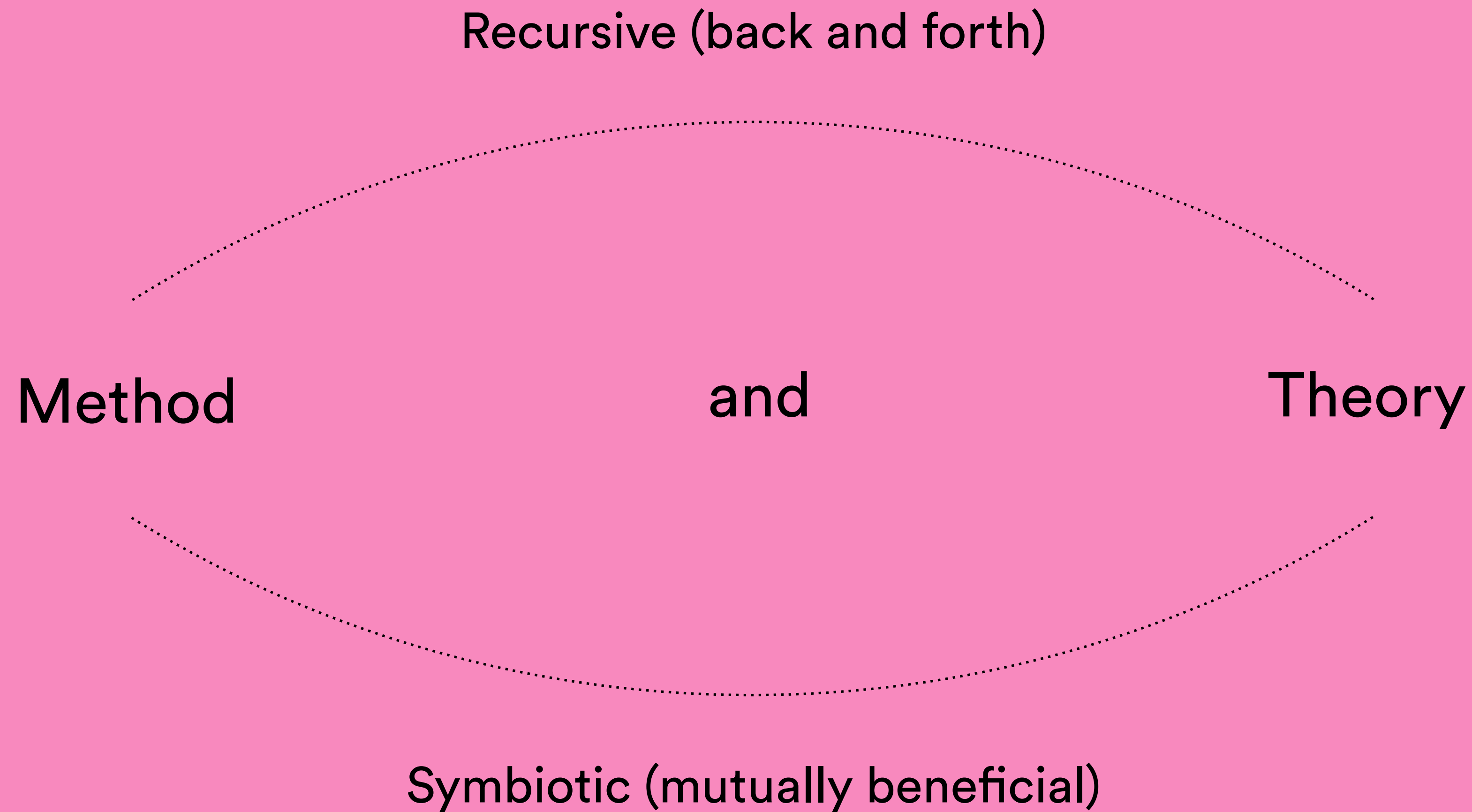


Method

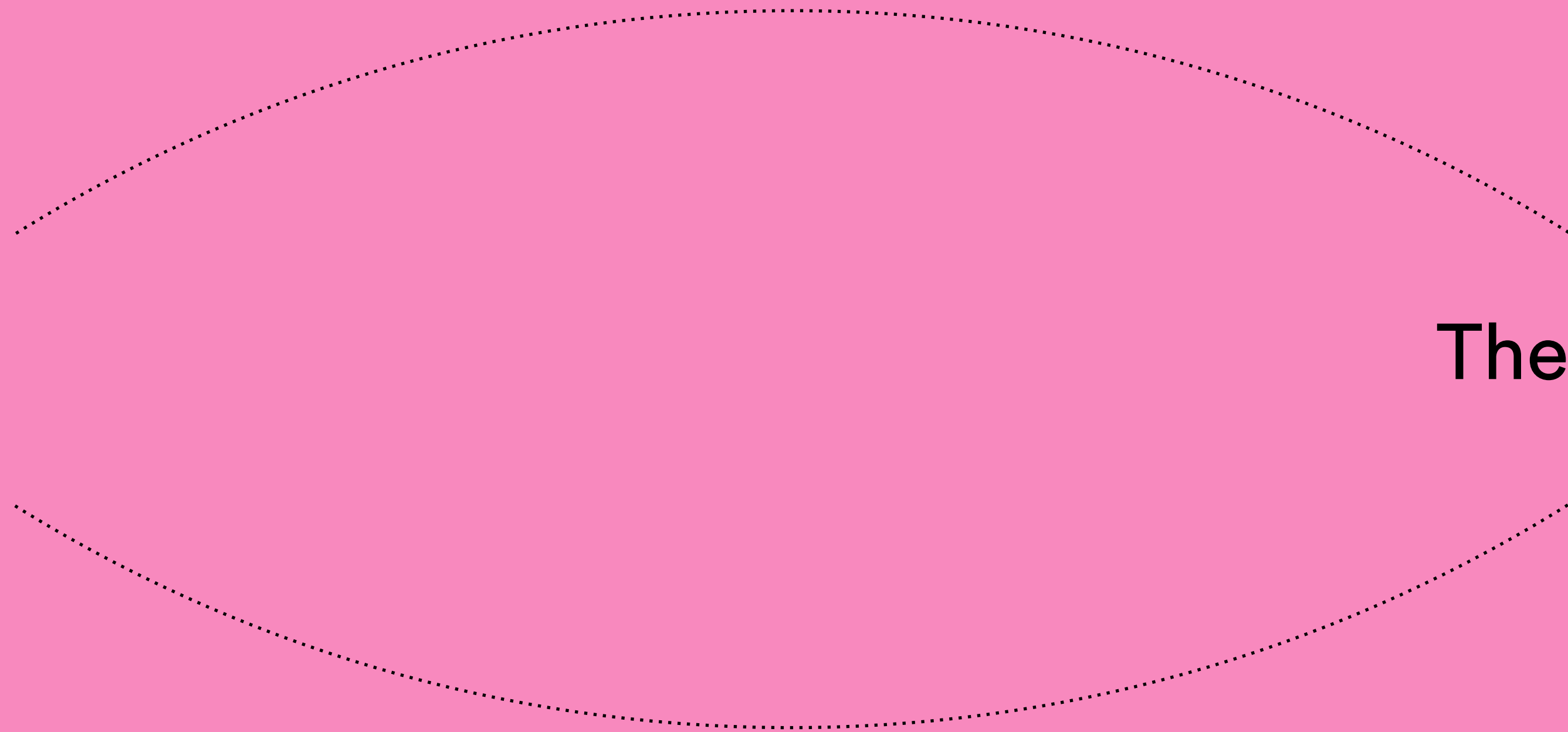
and

Theory











“Theory is a vehicle for ‘thinking otherwise’... It offers a language for challenge, and modes of thought, other than those articulated for us by dominant others ... The purpose of such theory is to defamiliarise present practices and categories ... and to open up spaces for the invention of new forms of experience”

Ball 1995: 265–6



## The material turn

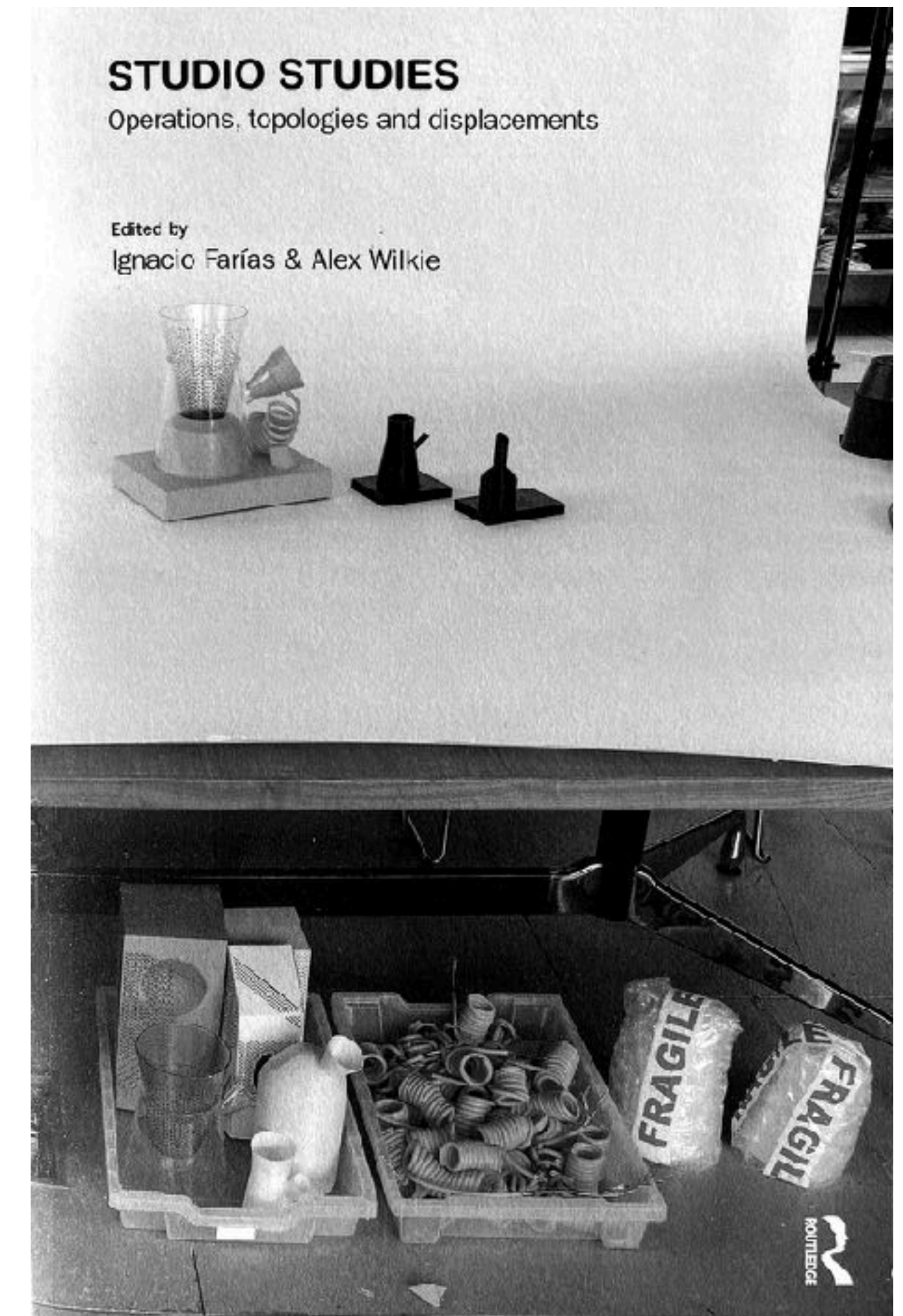
“Theory is a vehicle for ‘thinking otherwise’... It offers a language for challenge, and modes of thought, other than those articulated for us by dominant others ... The purpose of such theory is to defamiliarise present practices and categories ... and to open up spaces for the invention of new forms of experience”

Ball 1995: 265–6

Actor network theory (Bruno Latour, John Law)

Post-humansim (Donna Haraway)

New Materialisms (Karen Barad, Jane Bennet)





“These materials may be used by humans, but that may also use the humans and influence and change the educational practice, which then is no longer particularly human; instead it is socio-material”

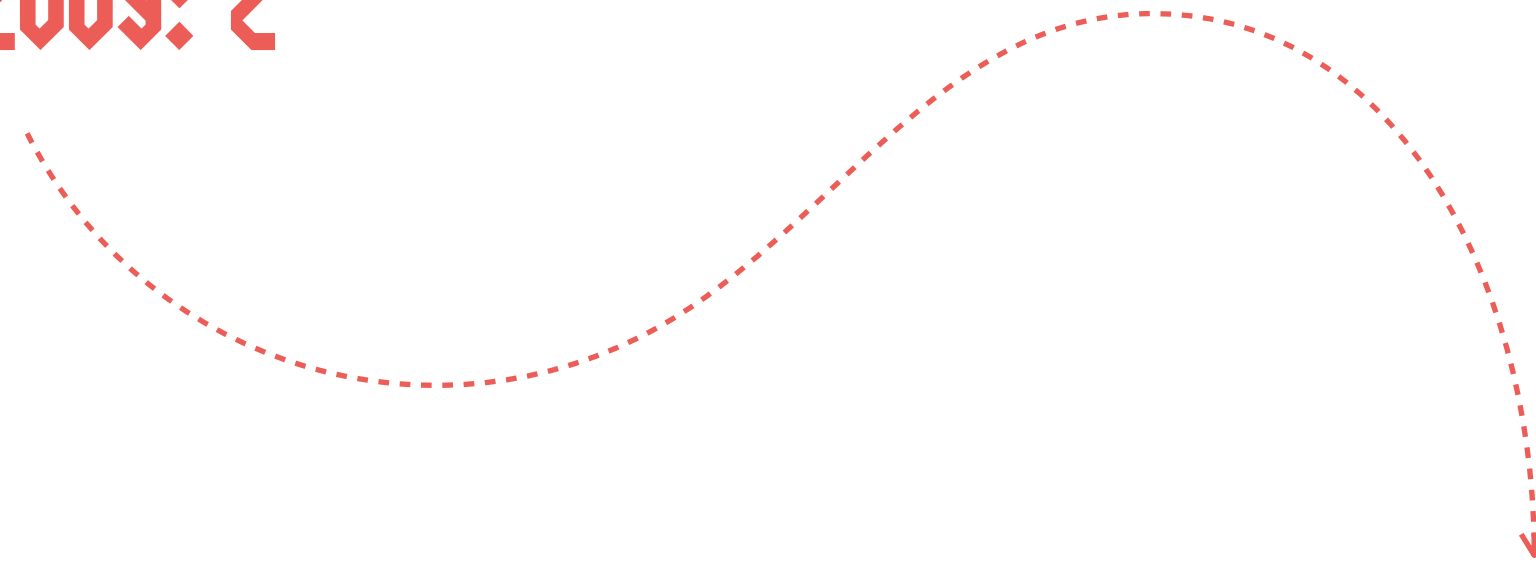
Sorenson 2009: 2





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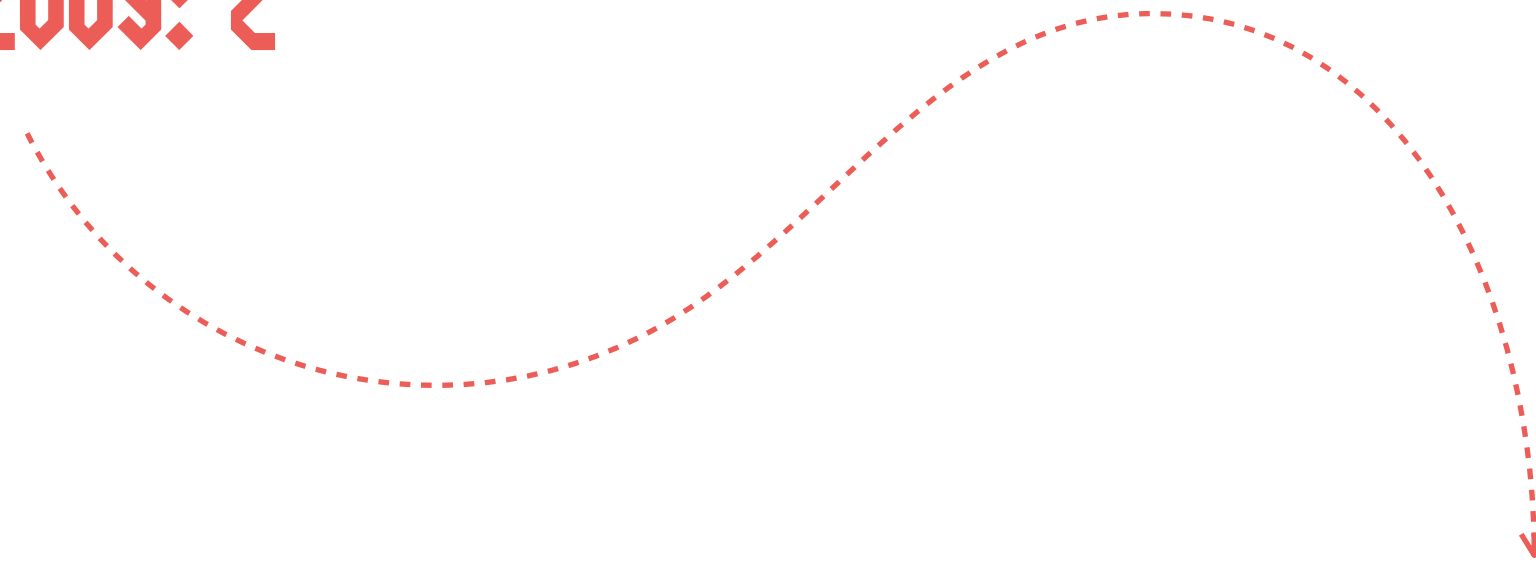
“Constitutively entangled”

**Orlikowski 2007**



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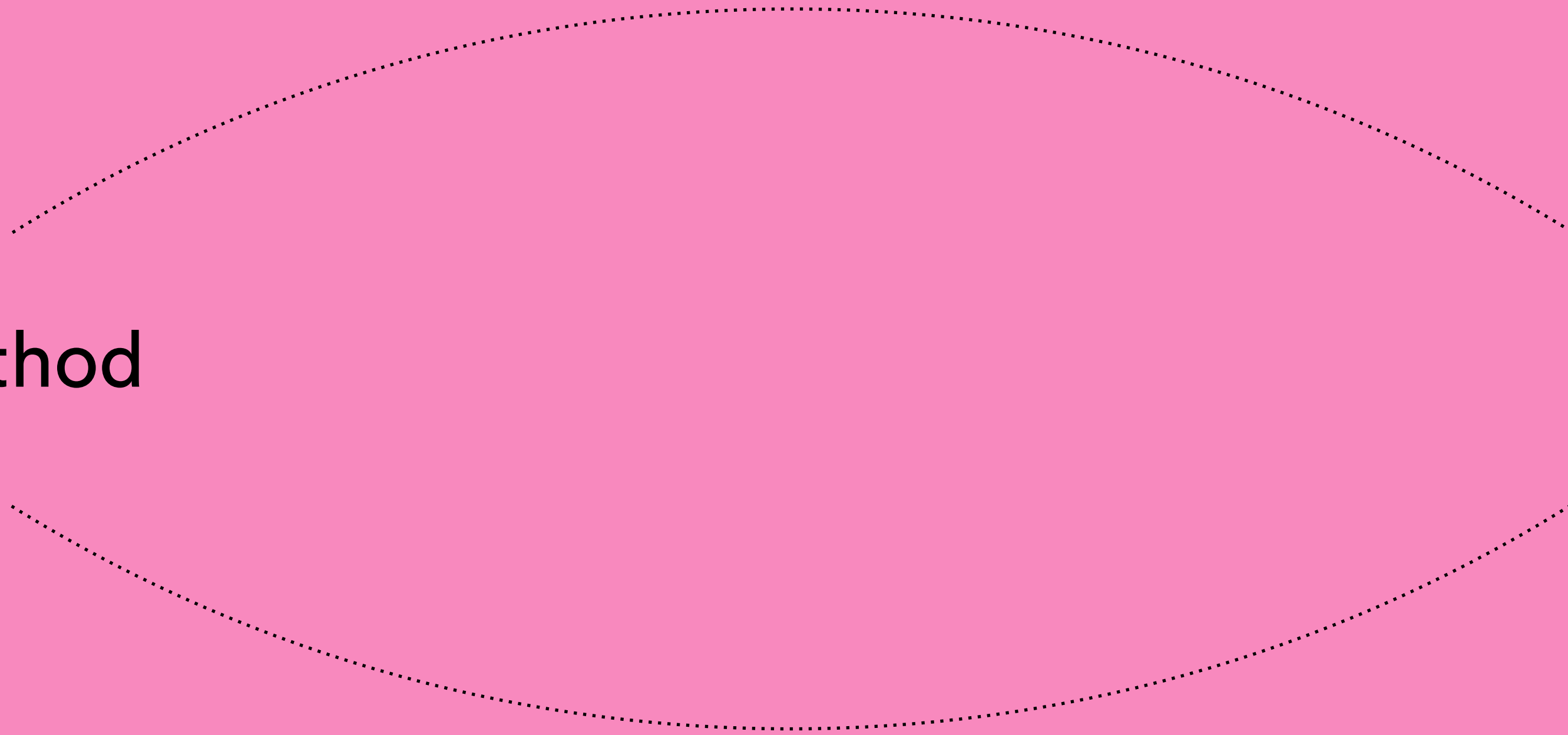


“Constitutively entangled”

**Orlikowski 2007**



Method





# Method

## Ethnographic Mapping

Nolte-Yupari (2017)

## hinterland

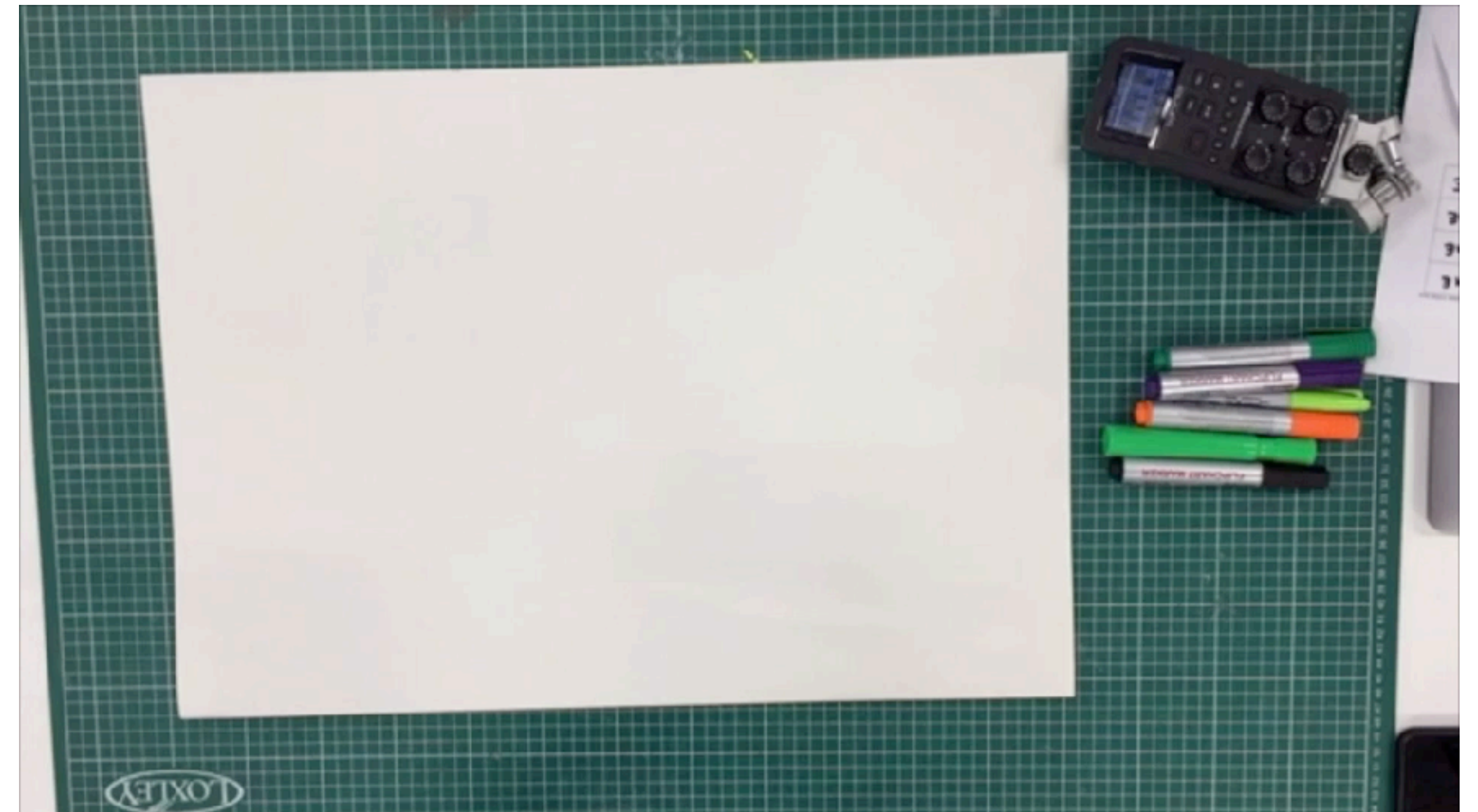
Pink 2006

expressing complex  
and abstract ideas

Copeland and Agosto (2012)

Helps participants and researchers  
see the normal in new ways

Banks (2001)





# Method

## Ethnographic Mapping

Nolte-Yupari (2017)

a way to meander with  
'the body that pees'

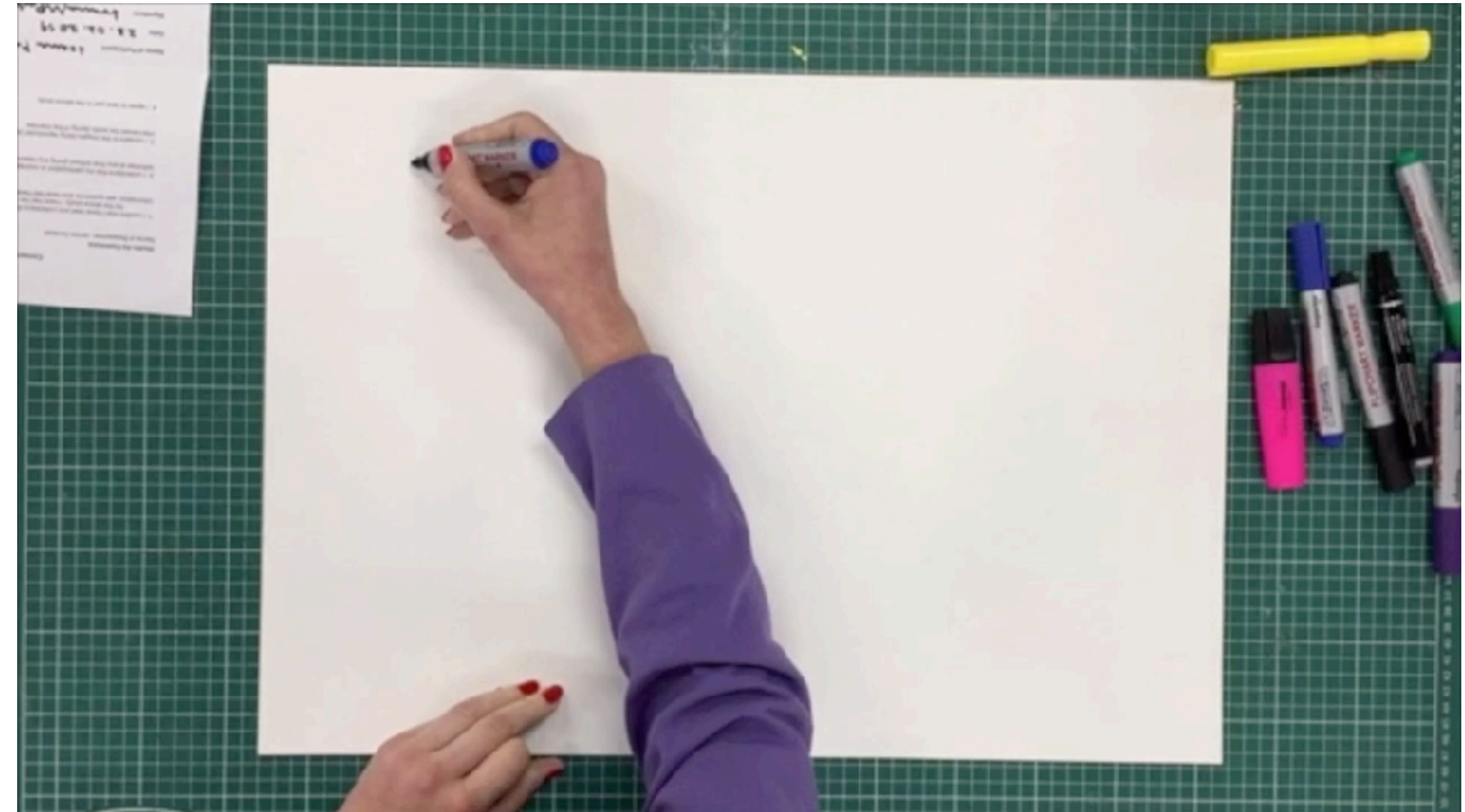
Zhang (2014)

'a gestural reenactment of  
journeys actually made'

Ingold (2007: 84)

'Emplacement'

Nolte-Yupari (2017)



Interviewed  
Five Tutors

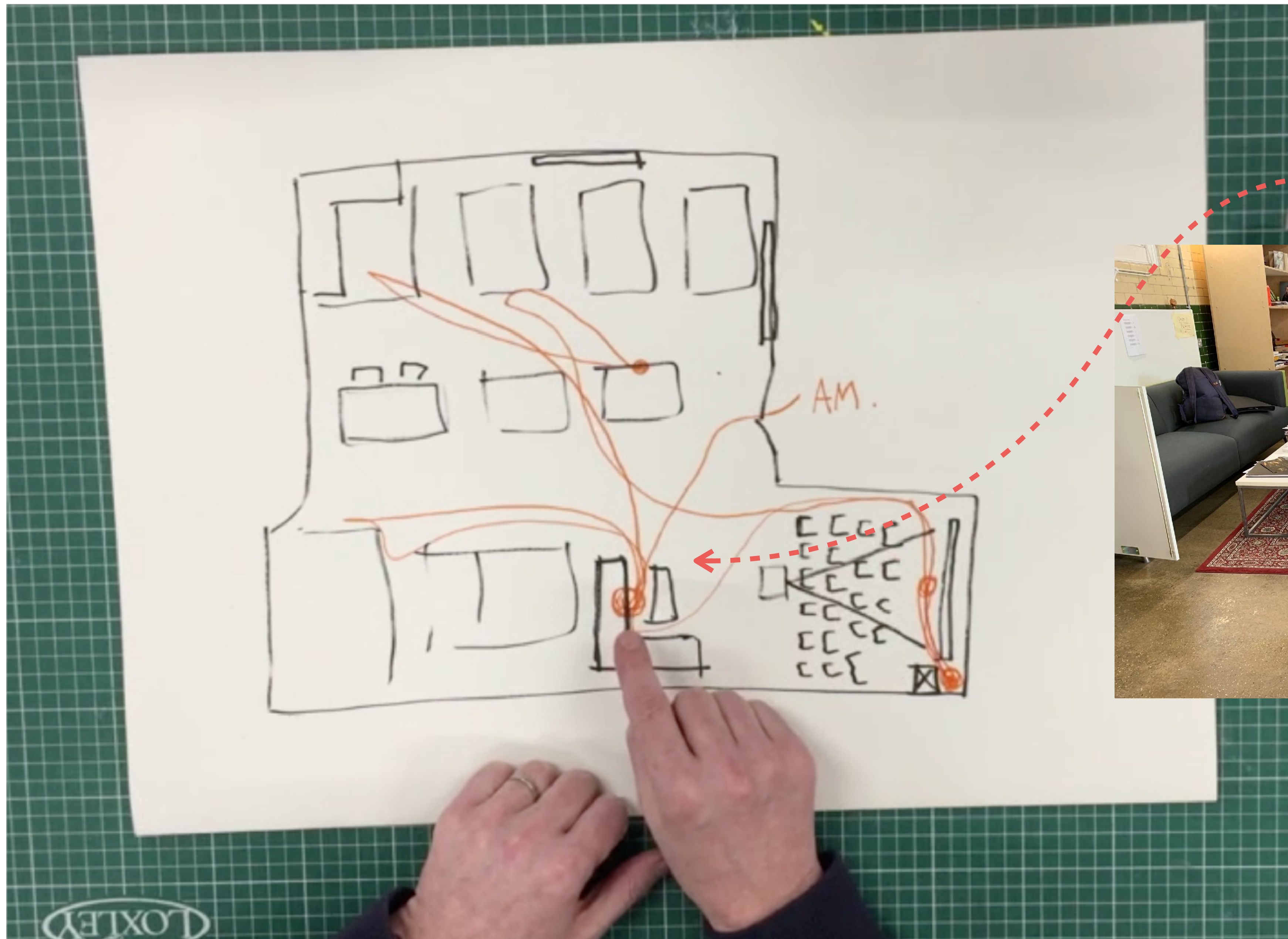


# Findings



What did we learn from the  
ethnographic mapping?







sofa-tutor  
socio-material  
flesh-foam  
constitutively entangled  
co-pedagogy







# Sofa-informality





# Sofa-informality



‘At the risk of sounding sedentary, I spend most of my teaching day in this zone [sofa]. I’ve never in any previous studio had “official sofas” ... There’s something where its therapeutic and that whole language of couch. People seem to talk easier, they come over, they sit down, the feel comfortable. Things are passed between, laptops are passed across, student might show you something and you put it on your knee.’ **Tutor 2**

Work might be  
held differently





# Sofa-informality

Informalities radiate  
because of the sofa



‘I had a very formal BA with clearly defined distance and I always thought a lot of things were missed because of that ... In this informality, you understand elements that are important to the work that are how people are, how they will feel’

**Tutor 3**



# Sofa-informality

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Tutor 3

‘the idea I have of informality is to have a conversation about their fears, so they don’t feel every moment will be a moment of evaluation...’

Tutor 3

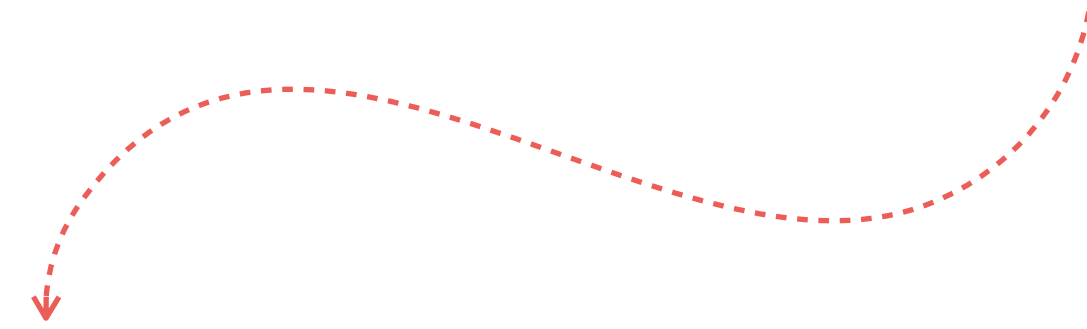


# Real Teaching / Not Teaching



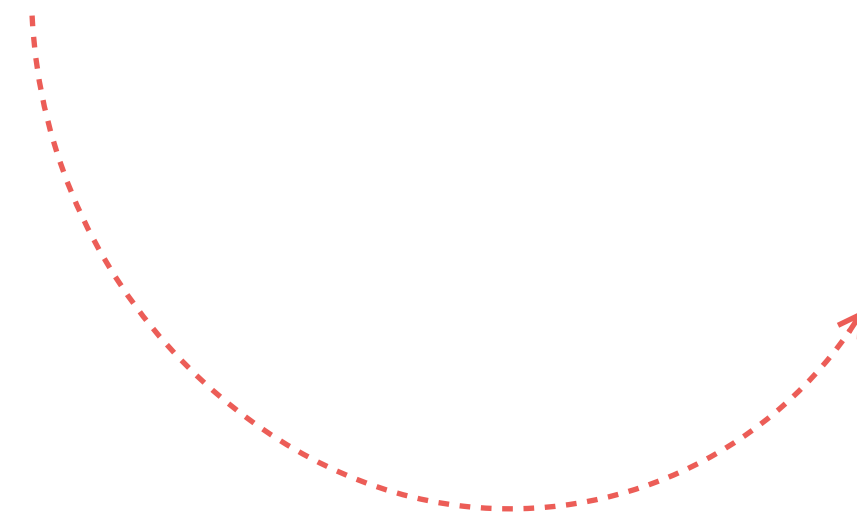


# Real Teaching / Not Teaching



‘... if I’m sat around a table it looks like you’re doing something proper and real, but if you’re just sat on the sofa it looks like informal chit chat.’

**Tutor 2**





# Real Teaching / Not Teaching



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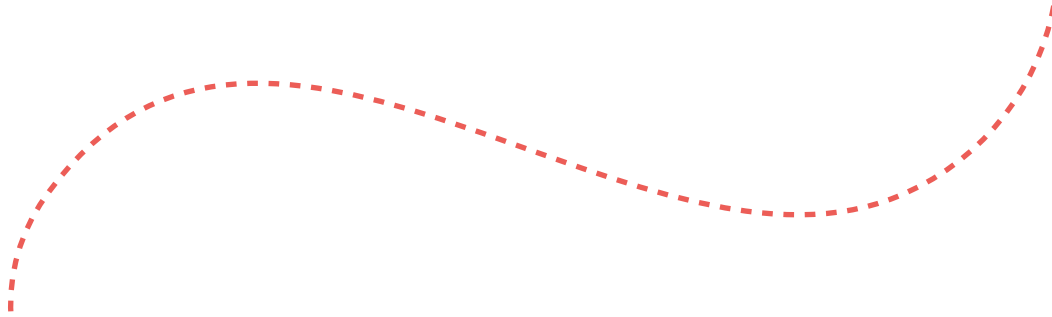
**Tutor 2**




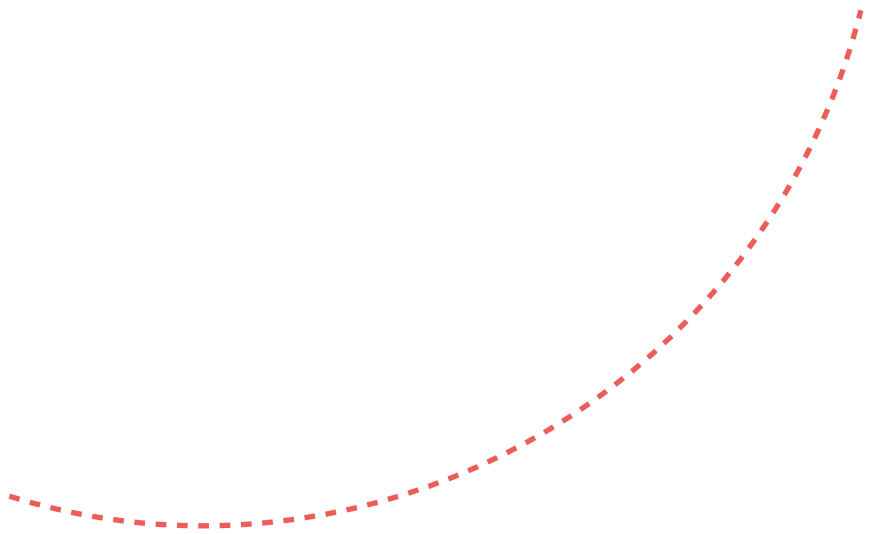
‘...actually often getting to the bottom of what somebody is about happens more authentically as it feels more real. There is actual dialogue and it’s a different dialogue – not two monologues ... I’m able to listen more effectively the dialogue becomes more true dialogue.’

**Tutor 2**





‘Marginal objects, objects with no clear place, play important roles ... they draw attention to how we have drawn the lines. Sometimes in doing so they incite us to reaffirm the lines, sometimes to call them into question...’



**Tuckle (1984:35)**





Informal / formal

Real teaching / not teaching

‘Marginal objects, objects with no clear place, play important roles ... they draw attention to how we have drawn the lines. Sometimes in doing so they incite us to reaffirm the lines, sometimes to call them into question...’

**Tuckle (1984:35)**

Bodies are rearranged  
in different ways

A room within a studio





‘... objects are not innocent but fraught with significance for the relations that they materialize.’

Suchman 2005



**Thank you**

**Thank you**

**Thank you**





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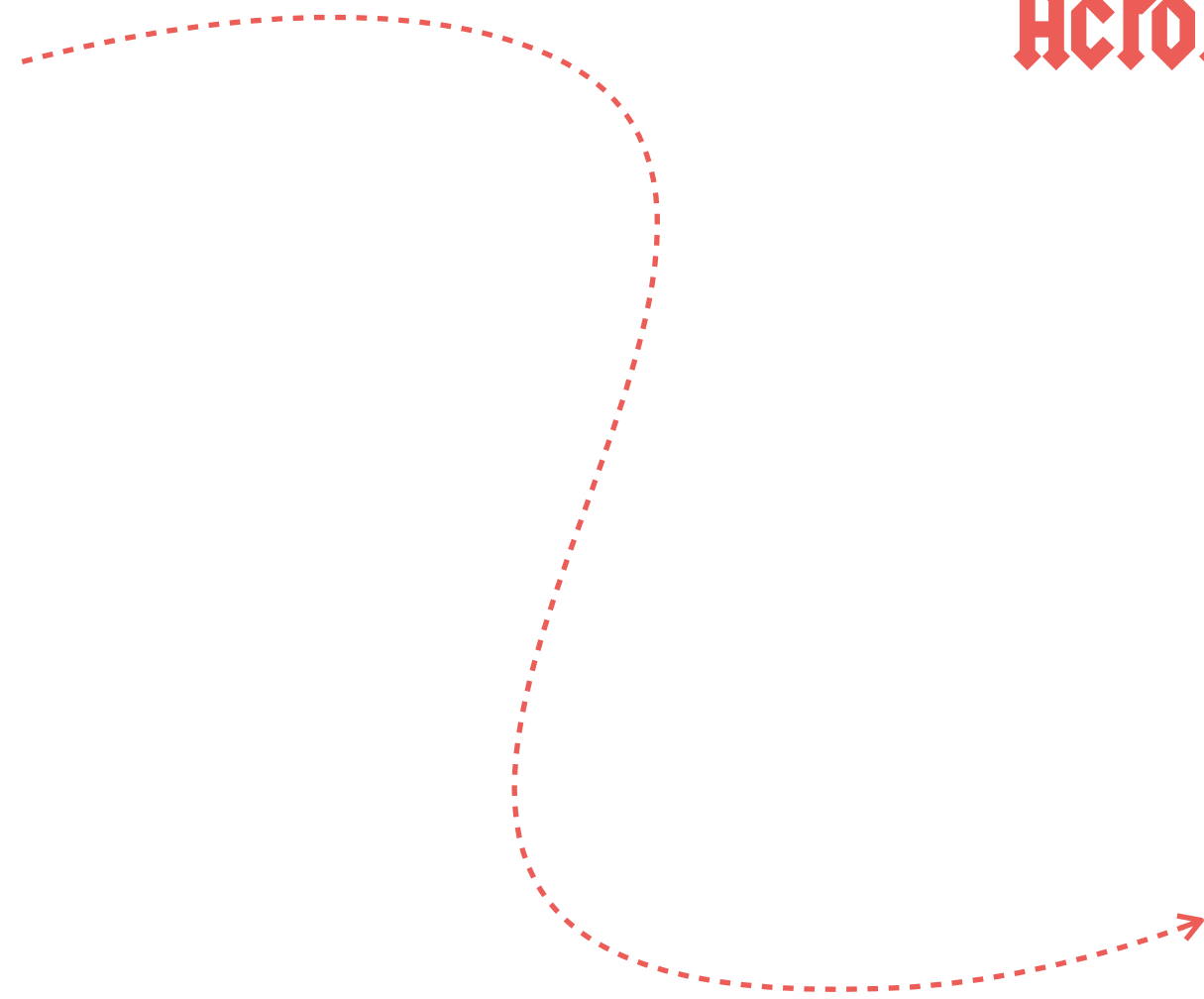
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‘The benefit of taking a socio-material approach ...  
It allows attention to focus on embodied learning  
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people...

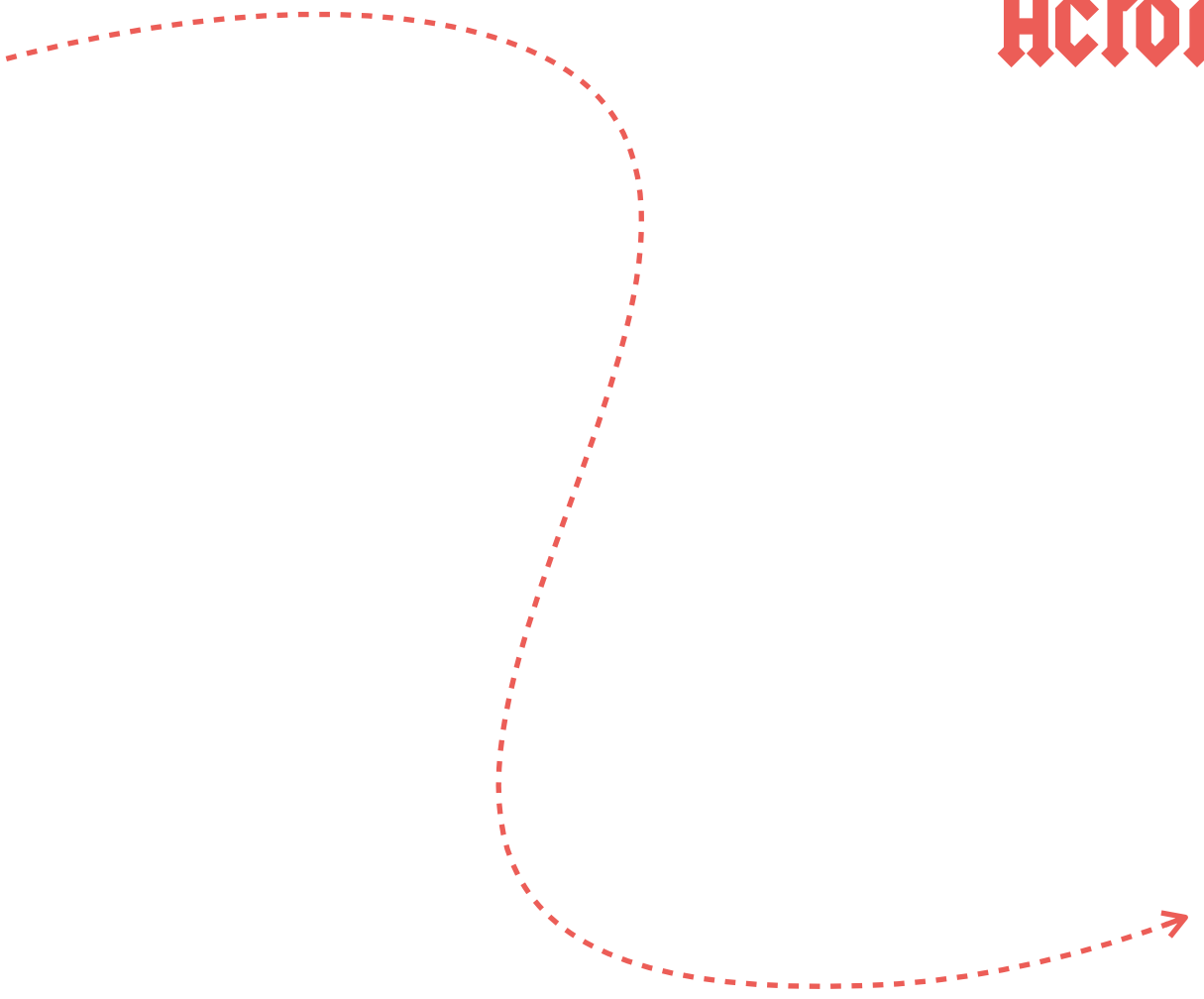
**Acton 2017:1442**





‘The benefit of taking a socio-material approach ...  
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Acton 2017:1442



the relations between the imagined  
affordances implicit in infrastructure design  
and construction, and the experienced  
realities of the people who inhabit those  
spaces in practice.’

Acton 2017:1442