

Struggles of an Hourly Paid Lecturer

PgCert Academic Practice in Art, Design and Communication
Action Research Project
Kuljeet Sibia



Accessibility 'Ruins' the design!

*According to some of my students.

Details of my initial enquiry and reasoning can be found in ['ARP Blog 1'](#)

1

2

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Boys (2014) argues, disability and access are not simply technical problems to be 'solved' with ramps and lifts, but fundamental questions about how we understand bodies, space, and belonging.

Arao and Clemens (2021) term a "brave space," an environment where students feel safe to share perspectives, take risks, and be vulnerable in their learning.

Details of my research development can be found in ['ARP Blog 2'](#)



A manifesto for Spatial Practices
at Central Saint Martins

ual: central
saint martins

1 WE SEE THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE AS FUNDAMENTALLY SOCIAL AND POLITICAL

2 WE SUPPORT NOT ONLY THE DEVELOPMENT OF RADICAL IDEAS, BUT ALSO THE RADICAL POTENTIAL OF MAKING AND BUILDING

3 WE USE OUR NAME TO RETHINK OUR PROFESSION, IMAGINING ROLES BEYOND DISCIPLINARY LIMITS, AND ACTIVELY ENGAGING IN OUR ART SCHOOL SETTING

4 WE ENGAGE CREATIVELY WITH THE REALITY OF THE CITY AROUND US, AND ITS LEGISLATIVE AND ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS BY UNDERTAKING LIVE PROJECTS THAT HAVE AGENCY

5 WE PROVIDE FLEXIBLE, ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS FOR STUDY ENCOURAGING DIVERSE CAREERS AND INNOVATIVE FUTURE PRACTICES

Research Question

Detailed further in my Ethical Research Plan.

How can ethically led debates, grounded in lived experience and case study reflection, support architecture students in developing more conscious awareness about inclusive approaches to design?

My Ethical Research Plan, and discussion on the framework for this project can be found in [‘ARP Blog2’](#)

Integrated Research Approach



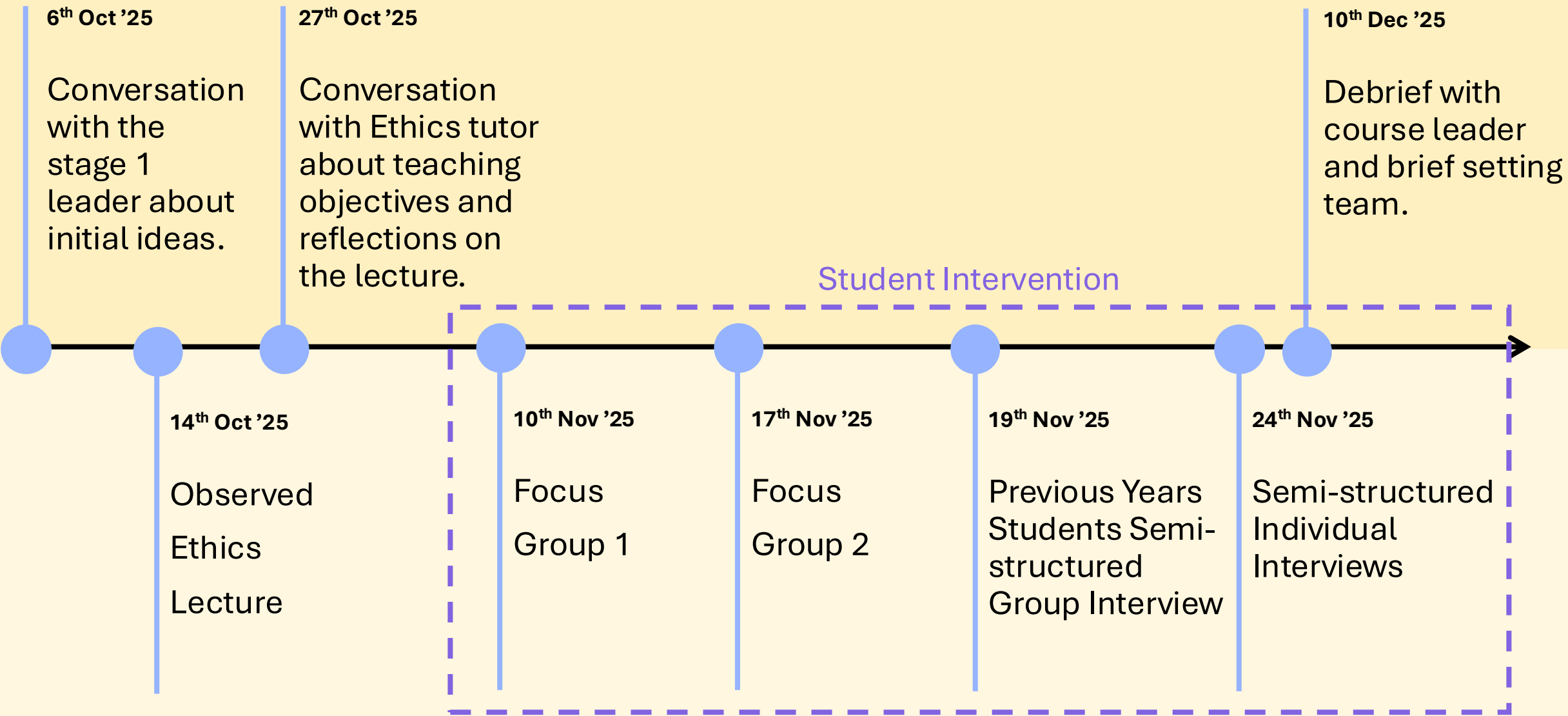
Case Study Videos

Jokela and Huhmarniemi (2018) note that art-based and creative methods can facilitate deeper engagement with complex social issues by making abstract concepts tangible and personal.

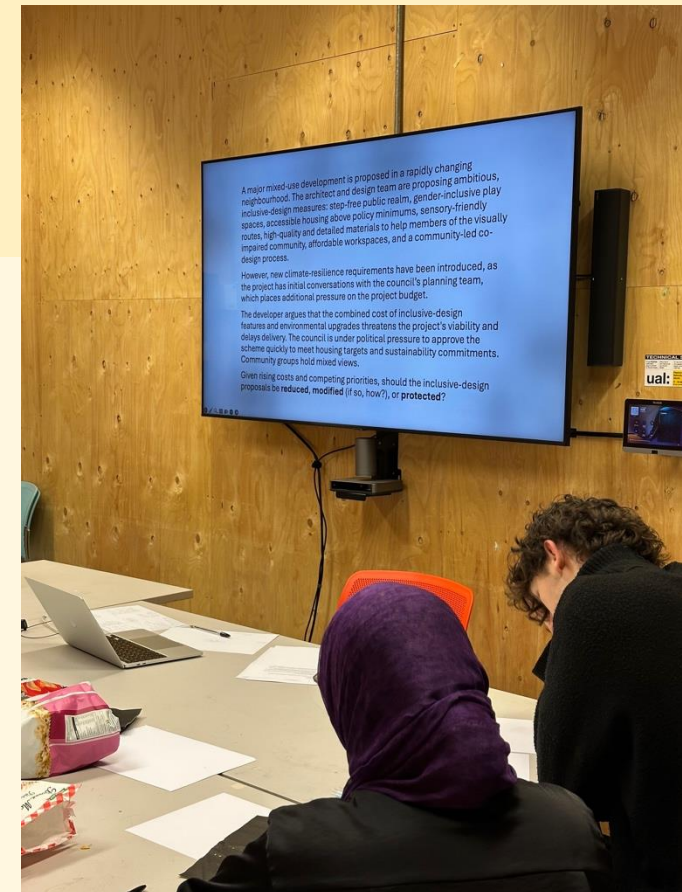
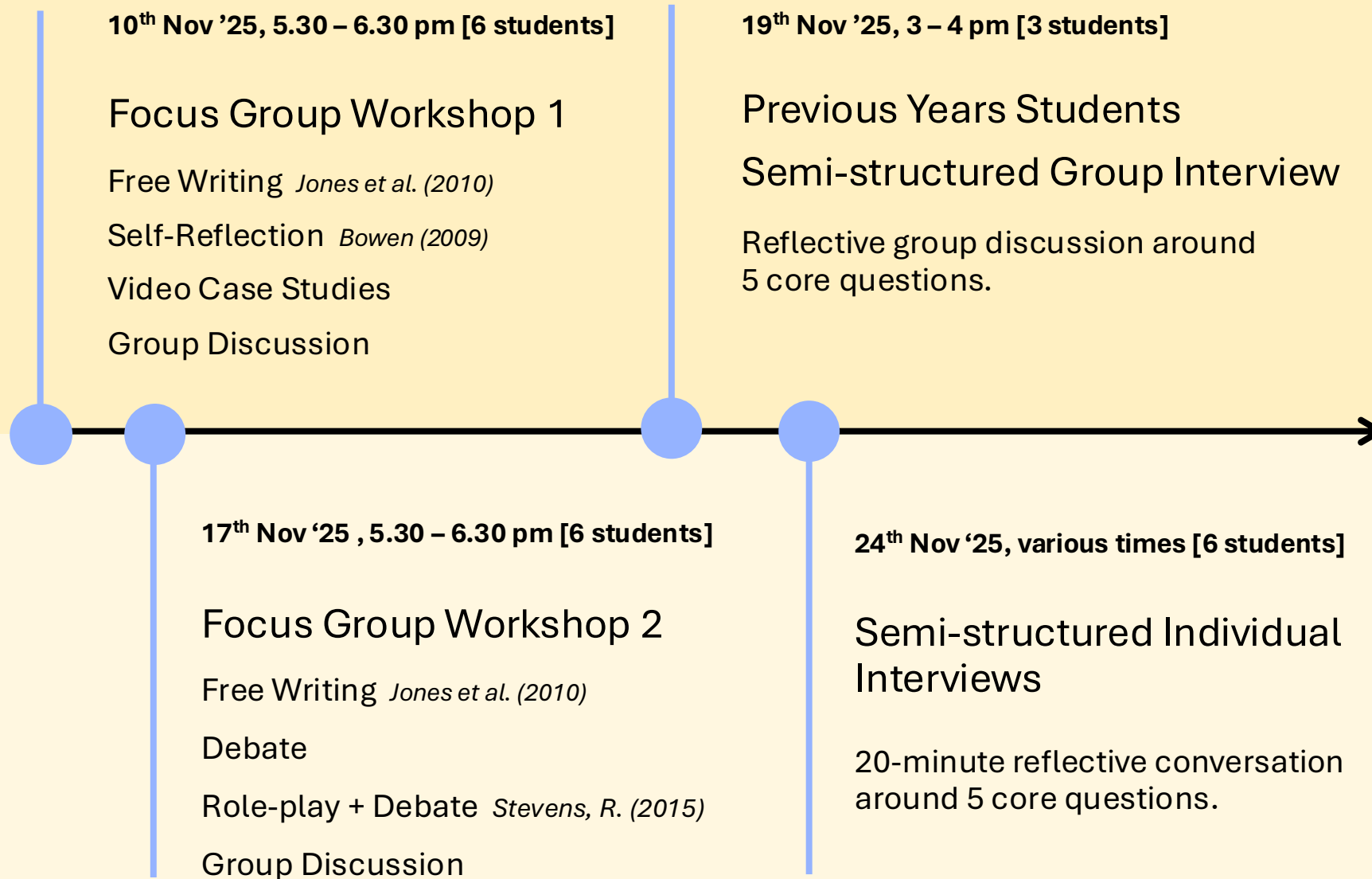
The development of my research approach can be read in further detail in [‘ARP Blog 3’](#)

Focus Group	Barbour (2018) argues that smaller focus groups enable deeper exploration of sensitive topics and ensure that all voices are heard.
Self Reflection	Tjora (2006) argues that fresh observation of familiar practices can reveal patterns and possibilities that might otherwise remain invisible.
Debate	Kennedy (2007) argues that debate formats cultivate critical thinking by requiring students to articulate and defend positions.
Role-play	Stevens (2015) demonstrates that role play is an effective active learning strategy that encourages participation, adds dynamism to learning, and promotes retention of material.
Interviews	Irvine et al. (2012) highlight that semi-structured interviews allow for clarification and deeper exploration of participants' responses whilst maintaining consistency through core questions.

Engagement and Participation Timeline



Data Collection Timeline



The structure, process and data collected from these sessions are outlined in '[ARP Blog 4](#)', '[ARP Blog 5](#)' and '[ARP Blog 7](#)'

Methods of Data Analysis

- Audio recordings and transcripts of discussions
- Students' written reflections and drawings
- Facilitator field notes taken during the workshops,
- Keyword analysis of interview transcripts

Data analysis and reflections are detail in '[ARP Blog 6](#)', '[ARP Blog 7](#)' and '[ARP Blog 8](#)'

Drawing on document analysis methods (Bowen, 2009), I compared student responses across activities to trace shifts in understanding and identify pedagogically significant moments.

Appendix to ARP Blog 4: Focus Group Discussion Transcript

Date: 10th November 2025
Discussion Duration: 29.42
Participants: 6 first-year BA Architecture students (anonysed as Student 1-6) and researcher, Kuljeet Sibia
Activity: Group discussion following the 1st focus group workshop, reflecting on observed case study videos on DeafSpace, beauty and blindness, and safety/gender/disability.

Discussion Transcript

Researcher: I'd like to just pick up a discussion. First of all, would you like to perhaps just kind of reflect a little bit on the topic itself that we've been exploring this evening? And then I'll come in with some prompts.

Student 1: I mean, in the second video, when she said "ordinary architecture," I think that kind of strikes something. Why are we looking into seeing it as ordinary and why should it not be just ordinary architecture? It shouldn't be inclusive design, it should just be in the design in general. We shouldn't have to think about it as a separate topic.

Researcher: Thank you. Anyone want to build upon that or have a different...?

Student 2: I feel like I knew a lot about inclusive design, but after this session, I feel like I really didn't know even the surface of it in the first place. There's so much more that I didn't think about.

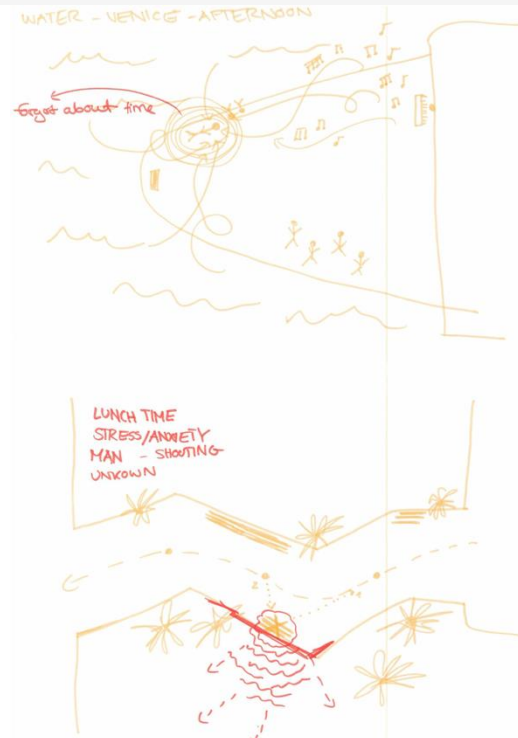
Researcher: Could you expand on that a little bit more, maybe reflecting on the first exercise that we did where you started speaking about your understanding and where you are now?

Student 2: I thought, at first, what inclusive design would be, sort of having those textured pathways for blind people or maybe braille signs that they could feel. I didn't really think about how... The way I was thinking of it was just having something that's having necessities. I didn't realise that inclusive design wasn't just about the necessities, it's more about making people feel like they're being just as thought about as normal. Like, not normal, like, the same amount of consideration as someone who is the ability level that it's designed for in the first place.

Researcher: Able-bodied.

Student 2: Yeah, able-bodied. It's really hard sometimes to think of the word, and I struggle as well.

Researcher: I find able-bodied is the technical term that we might choose to use. Thank you for that. I saw you kind of nodding your head along.



Key Insights from Word Frequency Analysis

"Design" (94) and "Inclusive" (68) dominate responses, confirming a central focus on inclusive design consciousness.

"People" (52) and "Space" (47) indicate strong human-centred spatial thinking.

"Group" (41), "Discussion" (28), and "Conversation" (20) highlight the importance students placed on collaborative learning environments.

"Understanding" (32), "Perspective" (29), and "Reflection" (26) demonstrate metacognitive engagement with the topic.

"Videos" (24) emerged as a significant, validating case study methodology for effectiveness.

"Role-play" (27) indicates the impact of the role-play intervention on student thinking.

Accessibility terms: "Accessibility" (27), "Access" (21), "Wheelchair" (8), "Blind" (8), and "Ramps" (9) show technical engagement alongside ethical considerations.

"Empathy" (11), "Consciousness" (12), and "Ethics" (11) suggest a shift toward ethical imperatives rather than a compliance mindset.

Key Insights from Word Frequency Analysis

"Accessible/Accessibility" (52+48=100) dominates over "Inclusive/Inclusivity" (41+23=64), revealing compliance-focused understanding rather than ethical framework.

"Ramp" (22), "Wheelchair" (14), "Elevator" (13), "Stairs" (12) show strong technical/regulatory focus on physical access solutions.

"Technical" (19), "Regulations" (9), "Constraints" (15) frame inclusive design as a problem/requirement rather than opportunity.

"Difficult" (14), "Expensive" (6), "Cost" (5) indicate students experienced inclusive design as burdensome.

"Opinion/Opinions" (36) is high, but "Understanding" (28 combined) suggests knowledge gaps remained.

"Lecture" (28) is prominent, but "Discussion" (15), and "Debate" (13) indicate desire for more interactive pedagogy.

"Gender/Gendered" (13), "Teenagers" (8), "Culture" (8) show emerging awareness of broader inclusion beyond disability.

"Learned/Learning" (35) vs "Taught" (8) suggests interest in self-directed learning rather than structured teaching.

Student Reflections from Semi-Structured Interviews

Refer to analysis in [‘ARP Blog 6’](#)

Focus Group



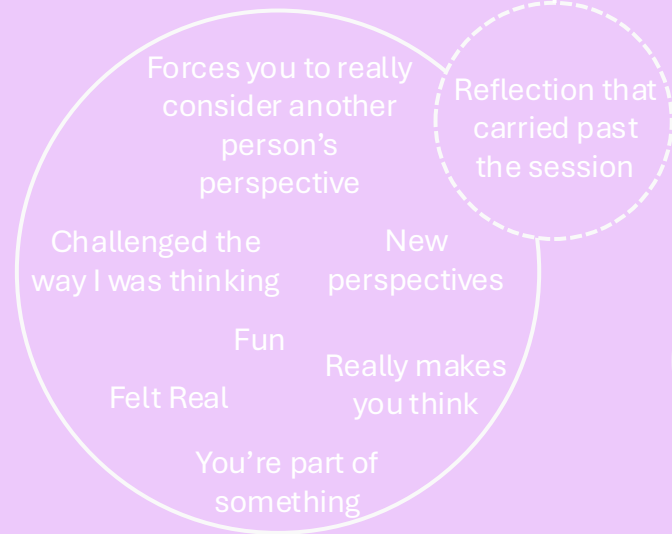
All **6 students** agreed the size of the focus groups offered them an appropriate and preferred learning environment for the topic.

Video Case Studies



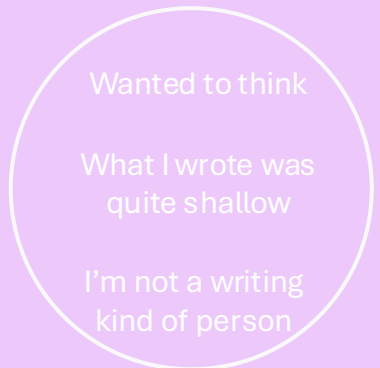
5 students found the video case studies was the methodology that made them most reflective on the topic of inclusive design.

Role-Play

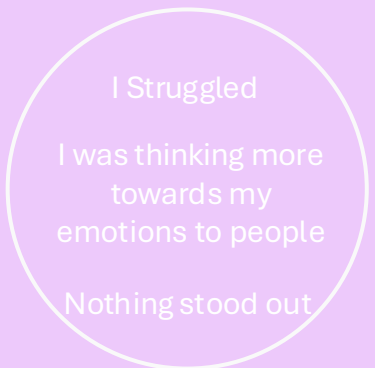


1 student found role-play the most successful, with **3 students** raising it alongside the video case studies.

Free Writing



Self Reflection



The students were **split** between the least effective methodologies on developing their knowledge and position on the topic.

1 student commented on the methodologies ability to influence post session learning.

Reflection that carried past the session

Findings and Emerging Themes

Pedagogical Environments

Brave spaces created through small-group formats.

Small group size proved fundamental. The format created what Arao and Clemens (2013) term a "brave space" where students felt simultaneously safe and gently obligated to contribute.

Role-Play for systems thinking

Embodied perspective-taking through role-play.

This shift from individualising responsibility to recognising structural constraints embodies what critical pedagogy seeks (Hooks, 1994).

Consciousness-driven

An authentic encounter with lived experience through case studies.

There was a fundamental shift from retrofit thinking to integrated design philosophy represents exactly the consciousness transformation this intervention sought. Case study videos proved catalytic here.

My findings, analysis and reflections are further detail in [‘ARP Blog 6’](#), [‘ARP Blog 7’](#) and [‘ARP Blog 8’](#)

ARP Limitations

- My analysis must account for **participant self-selection**: all students volunteered themselves and demonstrated existing interest in inclusive design. This self-selection created conditions for learning that must be acknowledged.
- I was unable to re-test methodologies with the same or new students and respond more openly to the challenges. For me, I'm excited to test the work and understand **whether brave space conditions can create openness even among the resistant**.
- There is more data and analysis than the parameters of 8 blogs and a presentation. My analysis has therefore focused on the **broader themes**, whereas with some time, more nuanced findings could help define news structures to test and enable learning.

Next Steps

- **Re-test** within my students in design studio groups.
- Present to the **senior team** to showcase student demand for learning and reflections on the course manifesto.
- **Follow up** with students from the focus group to see if their projects reflect learnings from the intervention.

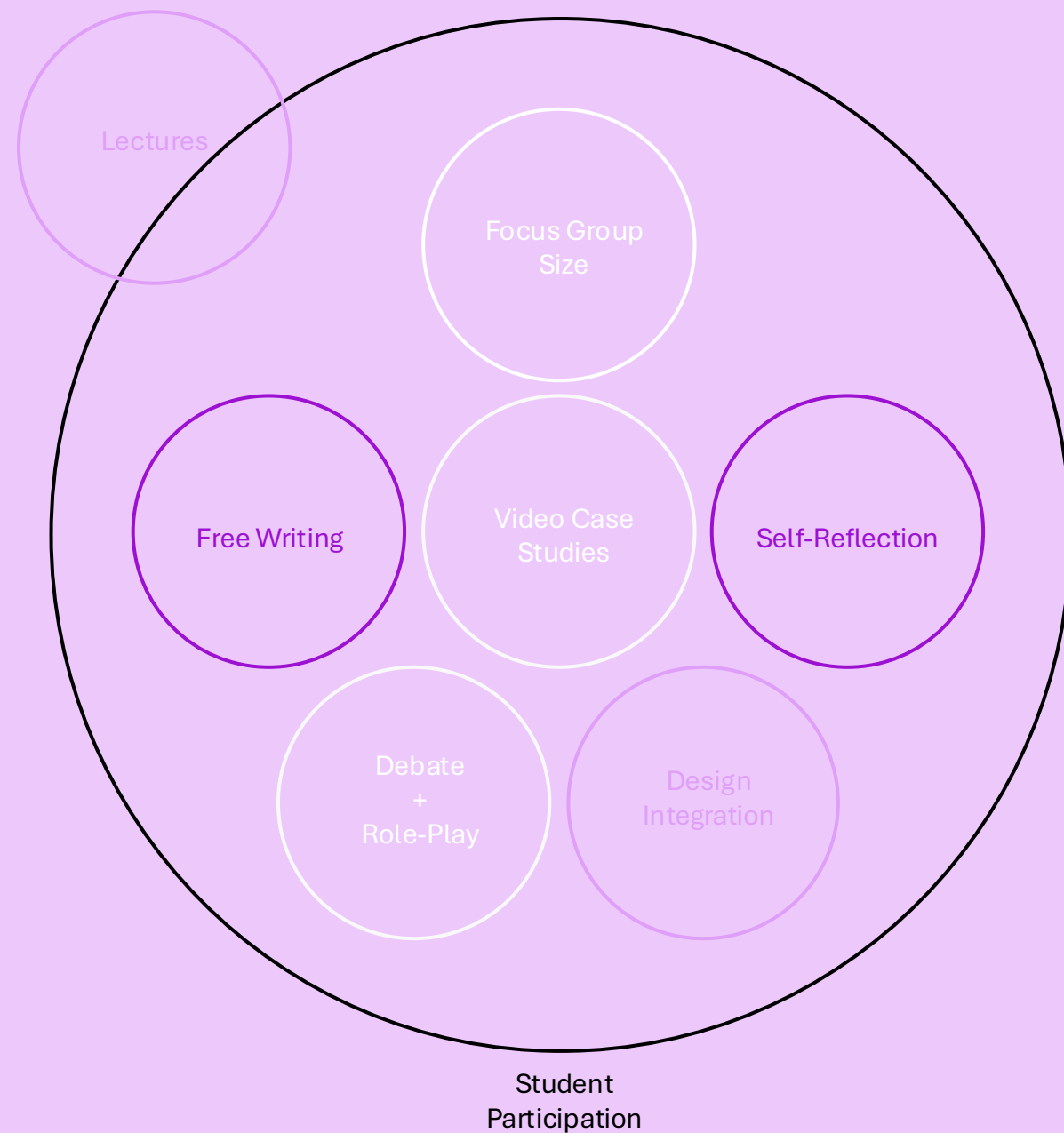
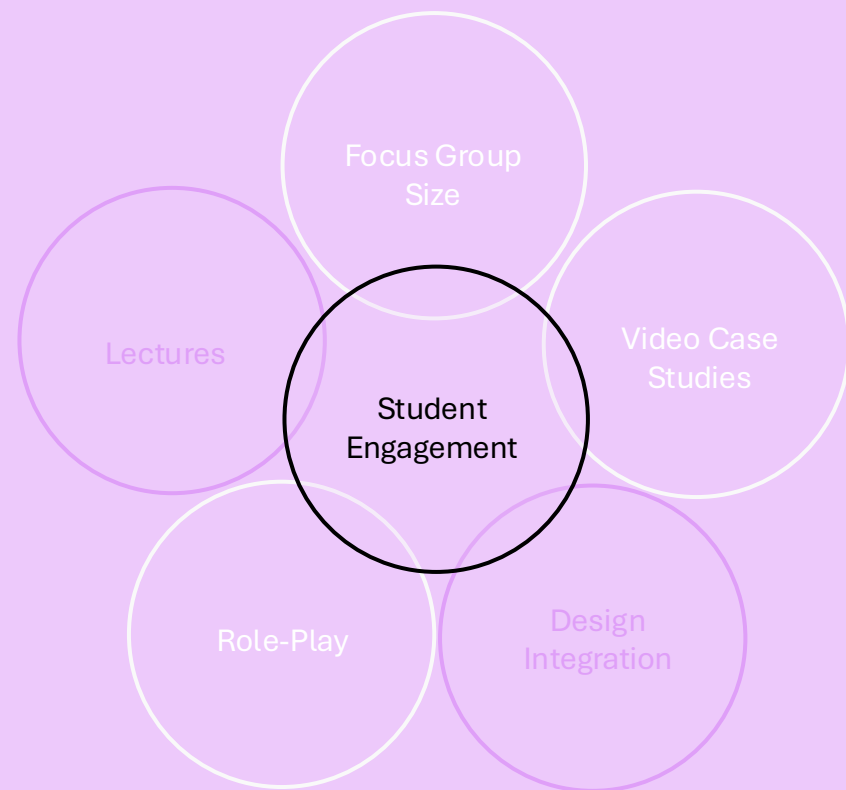
Further insight into my reflections and next steps are shared in '[ARP Blog 8](#)'

Was my Research Question Successful?

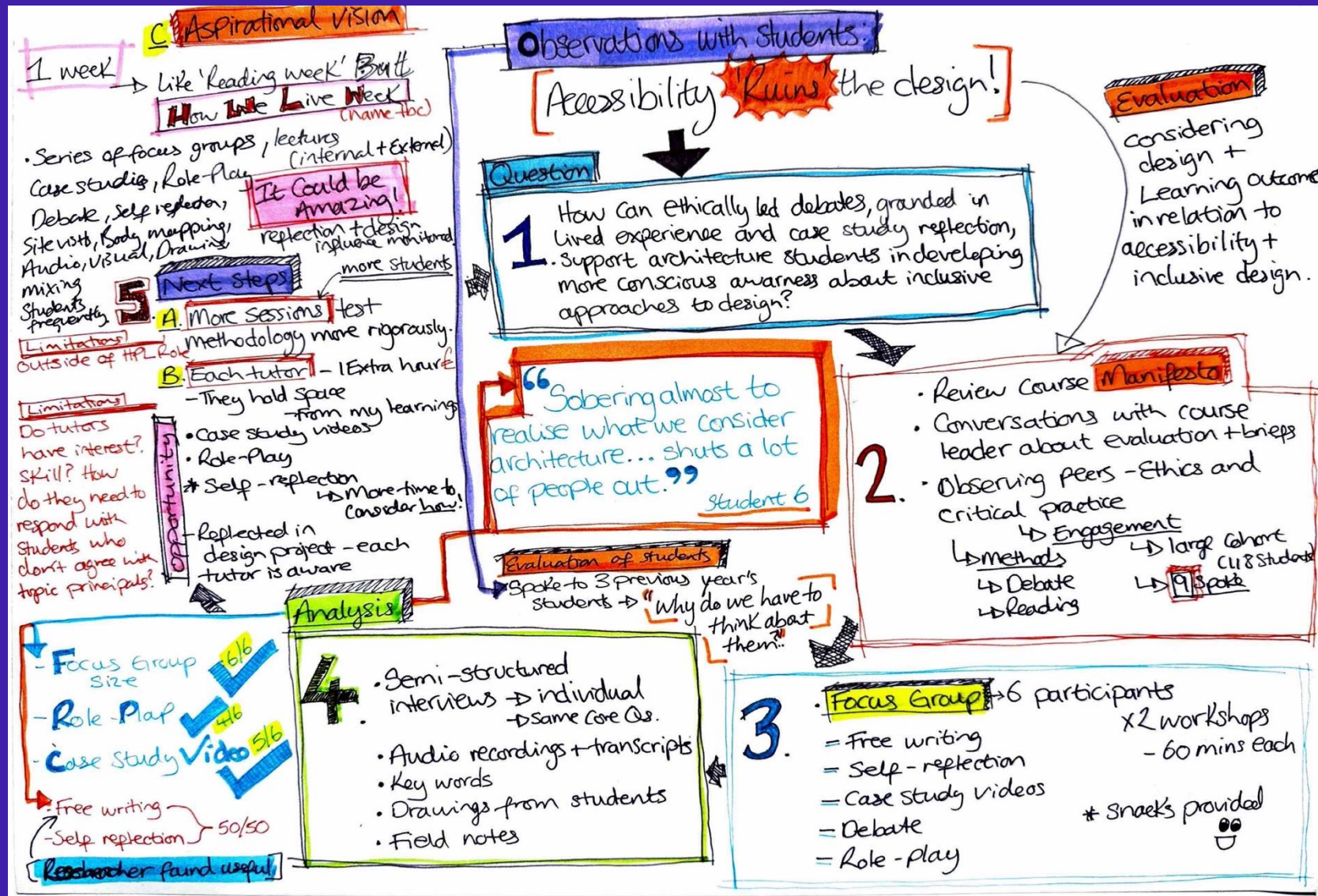
How can ethically led debates, grounded in lived experience and case study reflection, support architecture students in developing more conscious awareness about inclusive approaches to design?

- — — — — Successful
- - - - - Unsuccessful
- - - - - Inconclusive
(not tested)

Repositioning our thinking



ARP Cycle



Further insight into my reflections and next steps are shared in 'ARP Blog 8'

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Q+A

Suggested topics

Focus groups with students and tested methodologies:

- Free Writing
- Self Reflection
- Case Studies
- Debate
- Role-play

Learnings around holding ethically led conversations with students.

Learnings from conversations with previous years students.

ARP Cycle:

Future aspirations and limitations

Thank you

Thanks to my Pg Cert experience, the
HPL Struggle now feels a *little* lighter.