

*topsoil.*

*Experimental Pedagogies*

*2021*

## Experimental Pedagogies

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Working on *Rising Below the Surface* in 2019, trying to maintain a relationship across multiple countries and timezones was less of a global phenomenon. And we often failed at it beautifully. Then, *Rising Below the Surface* became about this failure as much as our continuous quest on how to work together and strategies of negotiation combined with a focus on our intimate bond.

This little publication, or chart, or graph, or map, as we have called it on several different occasions, is a continuation of most of these efforts and conditions with a more experimental approach to learning while practicing learning together, and a more rigorous methodological investigation. At the end, we have this almost alchemical composition of our memories of months of Zoom calls, voice messages and online meditation sessions. And a toolbox of things, methods, exercises, thoughts and examples that work for us. We will keep on consulting those tools, some of which are completely new and unexpectedly functional.

This is a closure, a summary, a pause, or a power nap, if you may, before continuing working on *Experimental Pedagogies* with others in the next months.

The last year has been much about transforming our collaborative research into a playing field. This shift had to do with letting go of some preconceived ideas on what we understand by research and what kind of practices we had at hand. We realised that our working process needs lightness and for us this includes the following:

**Connections:** What matters to us is how we are able to create bonds through our work: between us, between materials, objects and texts, how we create bonds with other people, knowledges and techniques. Relations are not easily lived; especially not when they have a strange double life in that they exist within a shared context and yet outside of it, within respective, very different spaces. We have come to understand that relations also live off conflicts and frictions and we have found our ways to take away a conflict's seriousness, instead focusing on its generative potential.

**Rhythms:** We needed to establish distinct phases for different speeds, states of minds and needs. In order for us to not get stuck, we have been working with seasons that give space to each phase but also point to a future shift in priorities: from free experimentation, to organisation, to sharing, to reflection.



**Impulses:** The inputs we share with one other each session often come from a place of direct excitement, hence, we call them impulses. Often they are stories someone told us or experiences we had in a lecture room, ideas from artists whose work we liked, or a text we came across. We need these materials to spur our minds. Impulses don't ask for a deep analysis but for a practice of looking together. We therefore don't claim to be experts delivering access to the material or objects of study – we could even say there is a certain sloppiness involved in the way we engage with scientific research and theory if these two are only comprised of definitions, demarcations, proper time investments, coherence and patience. We divert easily; but that doesn't mean we don't care. We are grateful for the artists' work, texts, people and ideas we look at and for what they allow us to think in dialogic ways.

**Thematic openness:** This year's research umbrella Experimental Pedagogies has actually accompanied us throughout our whole collaboration. It is probably the field which allows us best to connect our personal experiences with our professional lives (although this distinction itself makes noise). It has its boundaries and yet gives us the most freedom. The way we deal with it is by looking at our surroundings and the

situations we have found ourselves in the art and critical theory context. It is also by looking at texts on pedagogies, at practices we cherish as inspiring models and through spontaneous experimentation with methods. We implement dialogic principles and consider the ways in which our different, as much as shared contexts, shape our research, materials and our evaluations of it.



**O**ne of our biggest struggles has been to document our work so to be able to share it with others. The intention to document seems to be quickly forgotten as we come to be absorbed by the vortex that is the exciting intensity of our exchanges. Forms of documentation that seem to work best for us are those that don't interrupt our dynamic at all, such as the recordings of our Zoom calls, or the ones that fully interrupt it by introducing a new dynamic; this map, as we mainly have called it, is an example of the latter. An important aspect of the discussion when producing this map was centered on how to faithfully transmit that which we believe is the substance of our work. Thus, not only the intention to document crawls to the shore as we move deep into the ocean of our ideas; but with that intention, the capacity to leave a trace of what keeps and moves us together also crawls away.

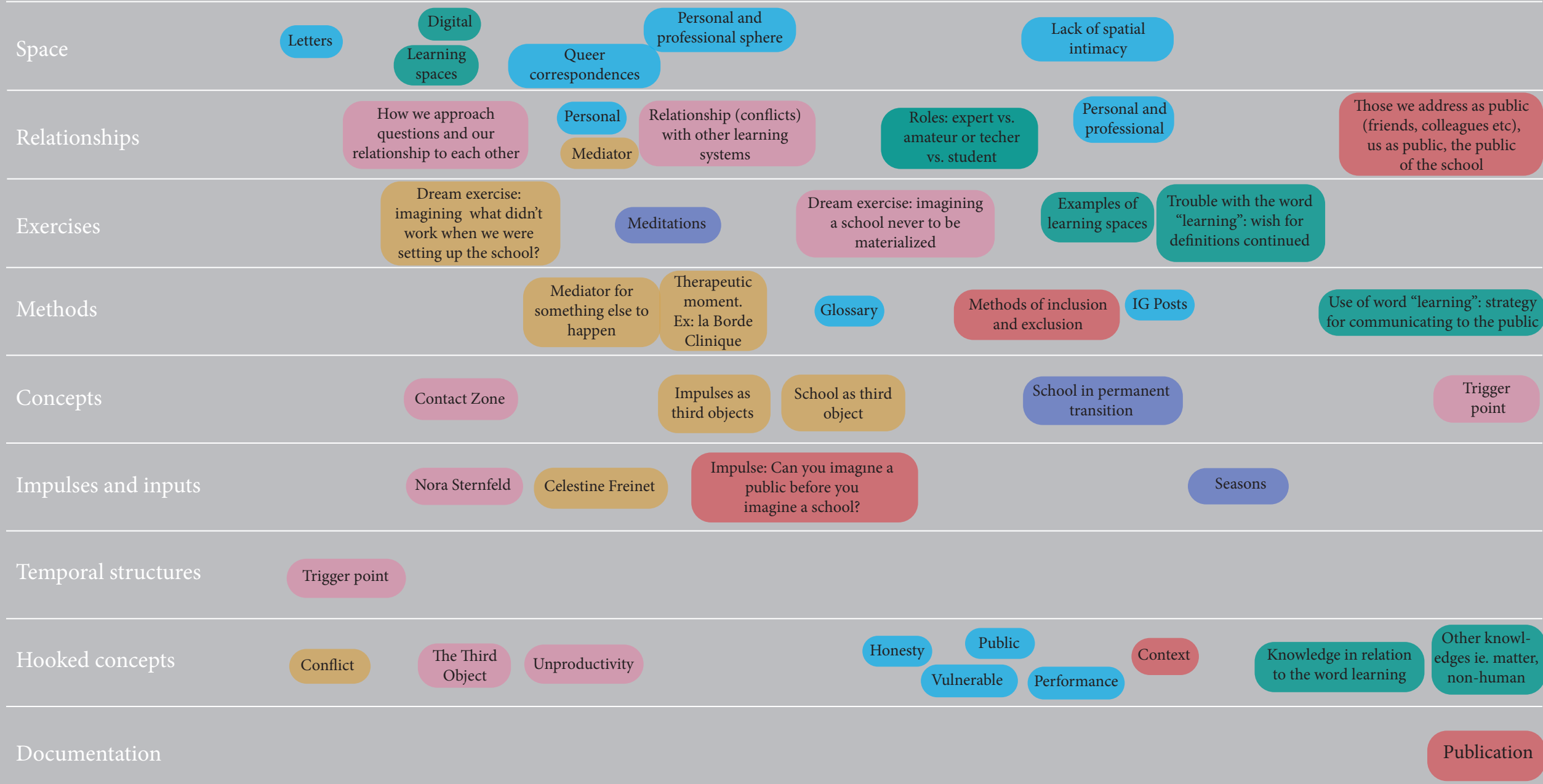
Our work surfaces from conflicted, although rapidly flowing waters. Our work emerges from and results in intimacy; an intimacy which helps us develop resilience to flow with the uneasy waves.

The present documentation exercise developed as a map following the moment when we realized that movement and transformation are key to what we do. Although far away from each other, we persevere in finding ways to move together. We meet on imaginary shores and we embark in travels together. The destinations, if any, are usually an excuse. We are rather interested in the obstacles that we come up when making all kinds of detours. From one detour to another, we end up at the vortex; a whirlpool where methods, topics, trigger points mix together just to be spitted out with a renewed form: methods come out as topics, topics come out as impulses, impulses come out as temporal structures, and so on. Such is the case of this map, which is both a documentation and a method for negotiating our different ways of remembering what we do. Epistemologically speaking, this means that by moving and continuously changing perspectives, we achieve a dynamic from where to rethink how we organize our research and break it into categories. Ultimately, although we don't stop to consider destinations much, we do have

intentions; we intend to come closer to the ways each one of us truly can and wants to learn and express such learning; we intend to come closer to one another by embarking on a journey for sensing, recognizing and potentiating each other's unique way of knowing: that perhaps may be what intimacy is for us.

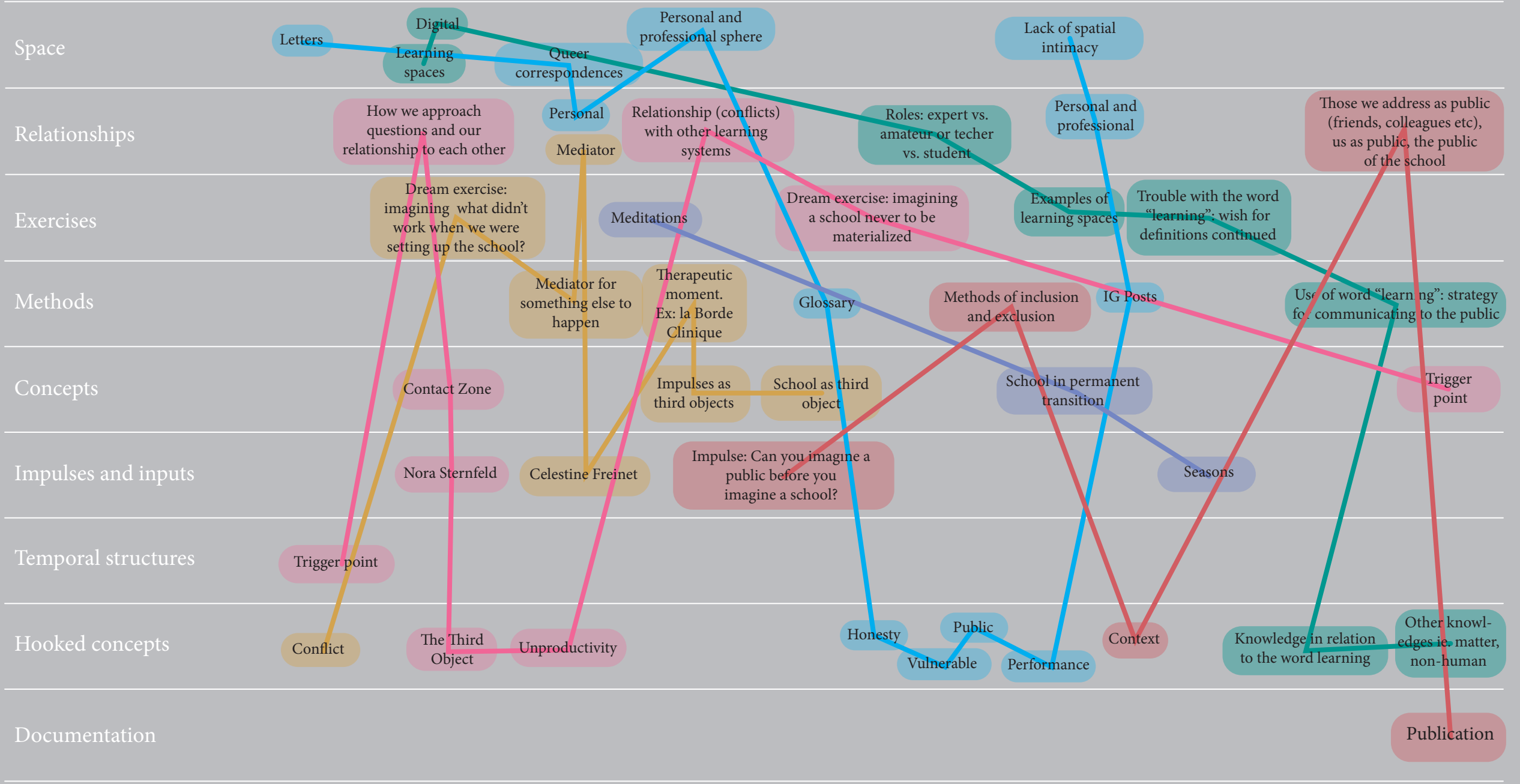
- Intimacy
- Conflict
- Third object
- Learning
- Public
- Others

June                      July                      October                      November                      December                      January



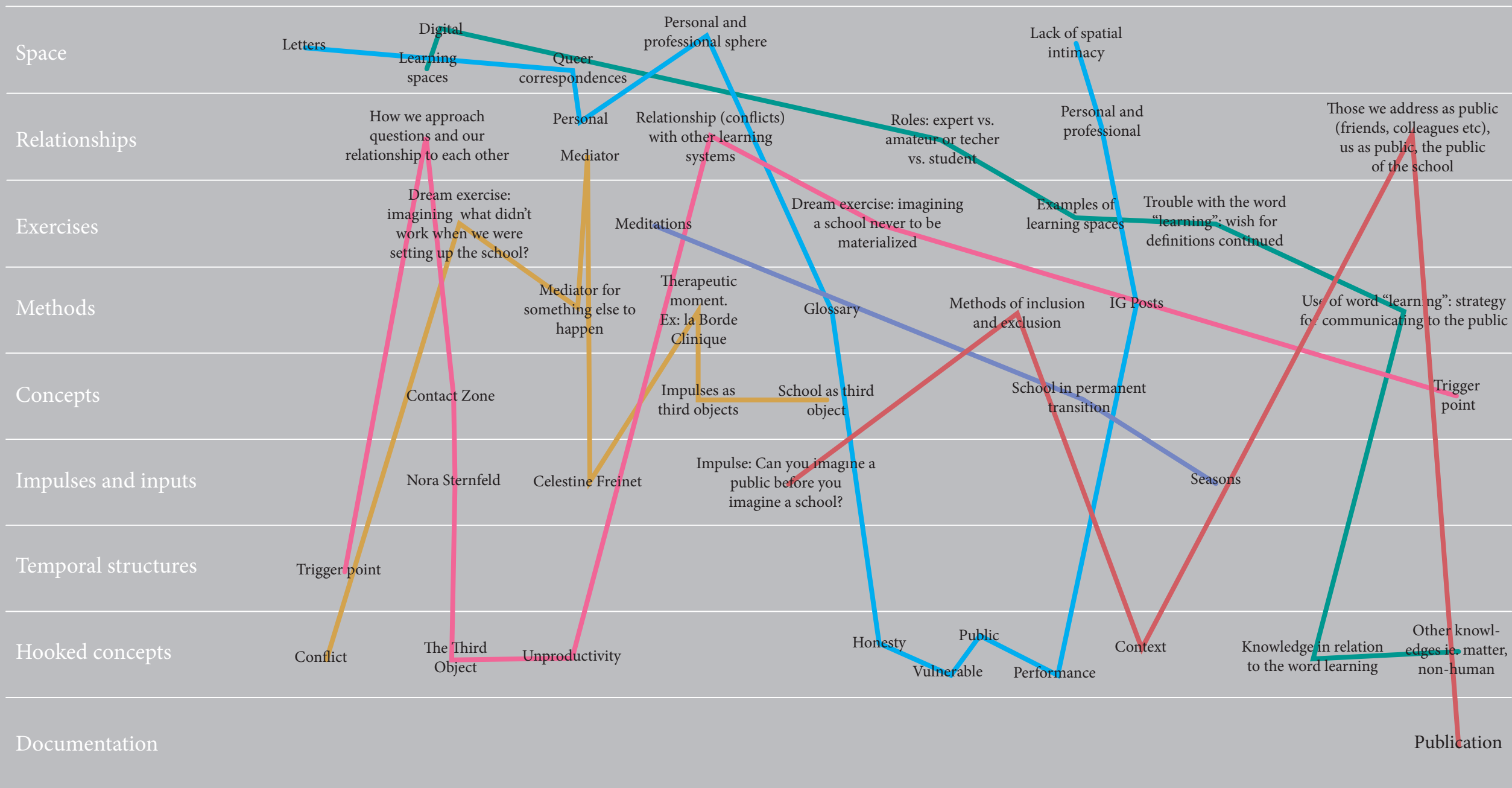
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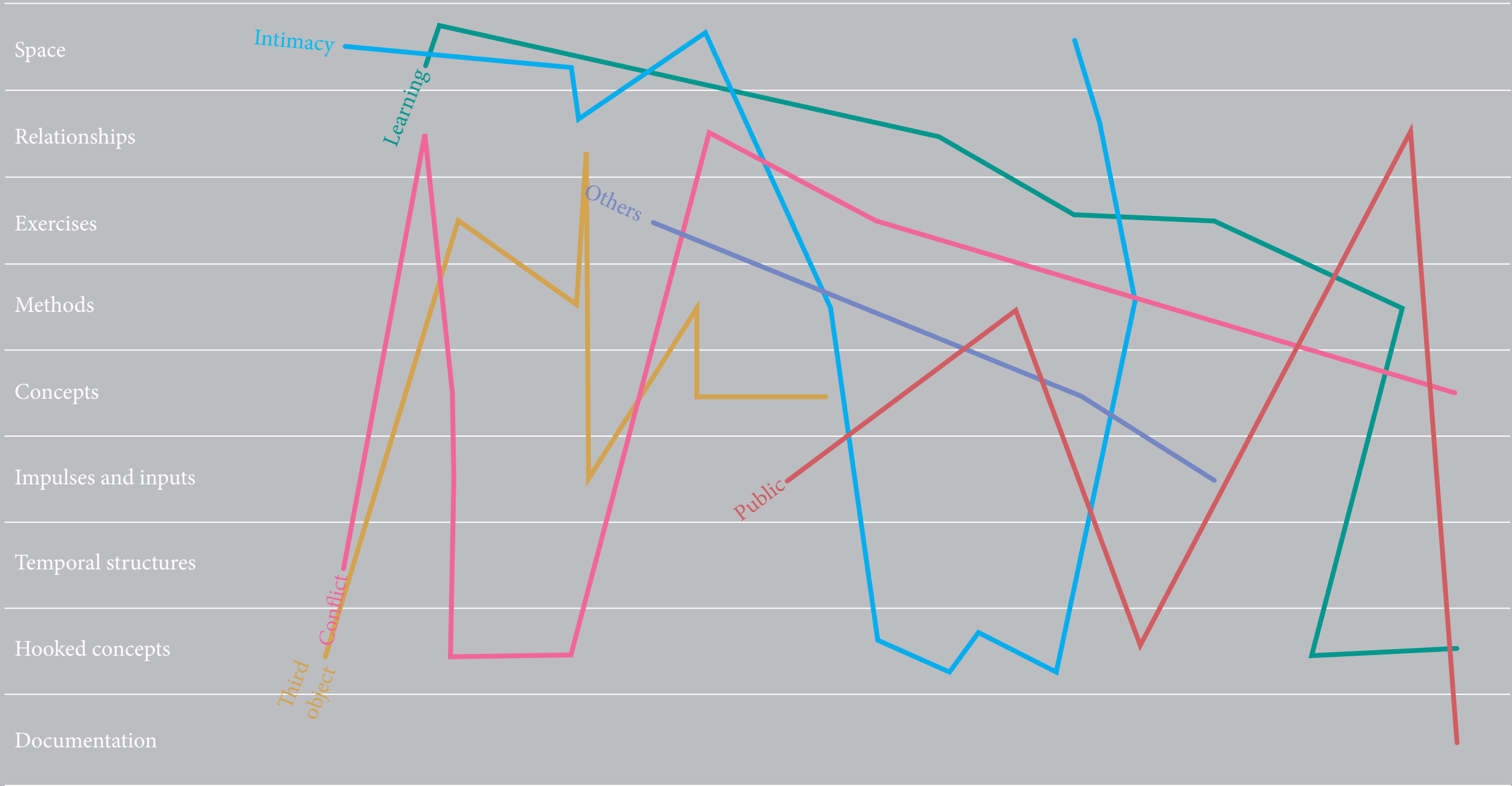
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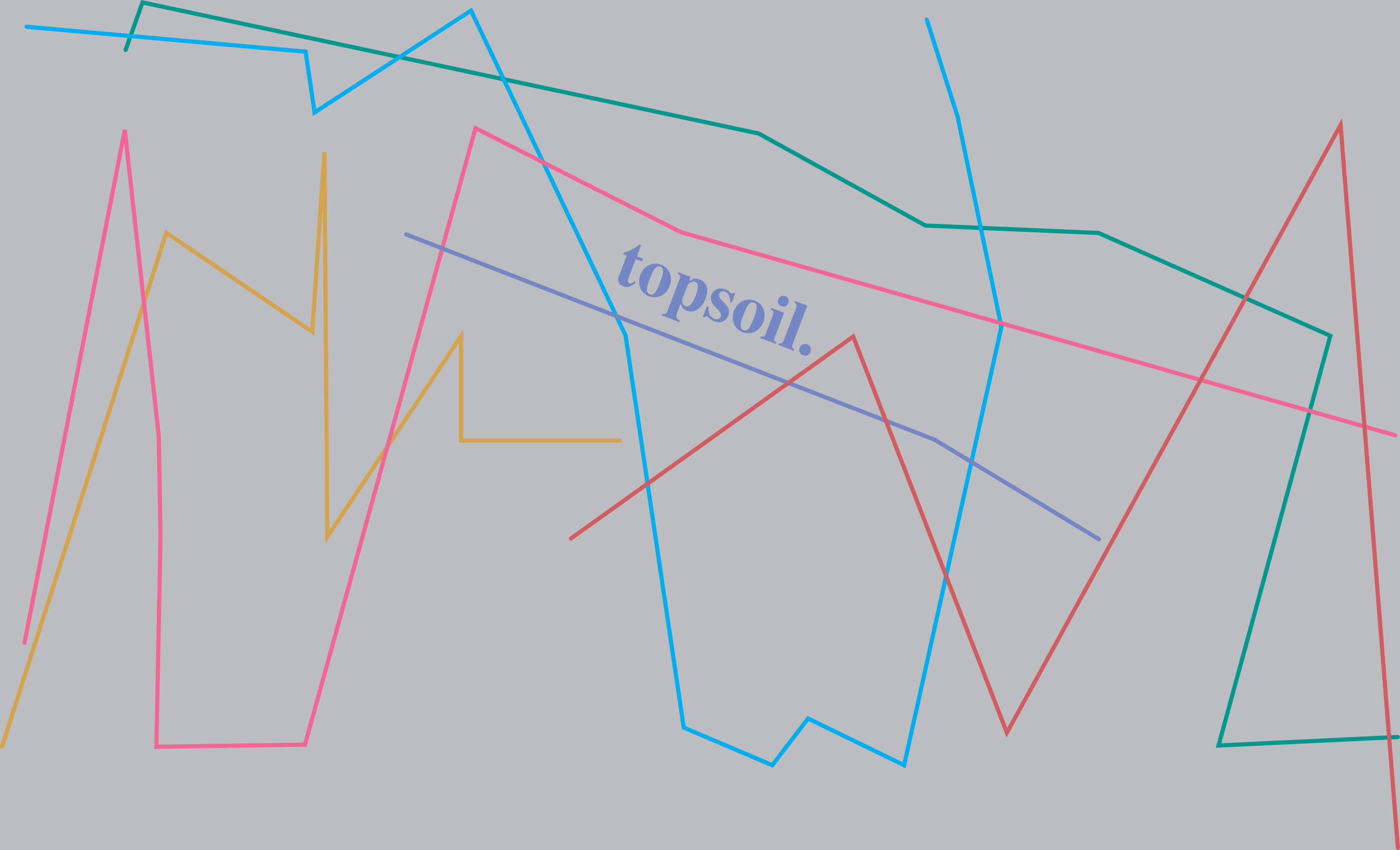
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