

## Rapport Studium Generale 'oefeningen in ecosystemisch leren', 30 maart 2023, Den Bosch.

Track: **What is Care and How do We Do It? Collective care and the ecosystem,**

Gegeven door Laura Oriol, Hannah Wierda en Philippine Hoegen.

Rapport opgesteld door Hannah en Philippine

### Verantwoording:

Dit rapport volgt het programma van de workshop zoals we dat op voorhand hadden ontworpen. Daar de workshop in het Engels werd gegeven is het programma dat ook. Maar om praktische redenen schrijven we onze bevindingen, die telkens na de programma punten staan genoteerd, in het Nederlands.

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### What is Care and How Do We Do It??

Collective care and the ecosystem

With Laura Oriol, Hannah Wierda en Philippine Hoegen

March 30 2023, as part of the Avans Studium Generale titled 'exercises in ecosystemic learning'.

Description: This track is a collective working session on the notion of care as cooperation: what is it and how can we – all of us who are part of this ecology – practice our relationships to each other, to institutions, to ... in such a way that it creates mutuality and support.

We will focus on support relationships and care practices that are desirable, possible or already present in the existing ecologies of the participants within the context of this educational institution. We will work on mapping out these ecologies to locate which support structures are there and which need to be expanded or fortified. We will propose some tools that can be helpful, but we will also invent together new tools and practices for collective care in an ecology of education.

### Program

**Small introduction** to the workshop, followed by: Check-in/temperature check

**Warm up:** movement/dance exercises

*Hannah: We gaan in een rondje zitten en we beginnen met de check-in, begeleid door Philippine.*

*Vertel je naam, pronouns, achtergrond, hoe je je voelt en waarom je hier vandaag bent. Alle redenen zijn goed, ook al weet je niet waarom je hier bent of was deze workshop als enige over. De groep bestaat uit studenten, een iemand van buiten de academie die een initiatief runt dat nadenkt over alternatieve economieën, en later tijdens de mapping exercise komt er nog een docent bij. Het zijn studenten van St. Joost Den Bosch en Breda, en HKU (MA Scenography).*

*Na de check-in gaan we de warming-up van Laura doen.*

*Deze oefening doe je met degene die naast je staat. Je gaat tegenover elkaar staan, armen omhoog voor je lichaam en je handen plat tegen die van degene voor je. Doe je ogen dicht. Je gaat een beetje naar achter met je voeten, maar houdt contact met je handen, zodat je zwaartepunt niet meer boven je voeten is en je moet leunen tegen je partner. Je ondersteunt elkaar. Probeer een punt te vinden dat je elkaar steunt, maar dat het niet zwaar voelt, dat het gemakkelijk gaat. Je probeert een bepaald evenwicht te vinden.*

*Steunend tegen elkaar aan gaan we door de ruimte bewegen, voel elkaar aan. Als de één een stap naar achter zet verandert de balans en zoek je samen naar die nieuwe balans. Zodoende beweeg je door de ruimte.*

*Philippine: De bewegingsoefening die Laura ons gaf, waarbij je op elkaar steunt en daar een balans in zoekt, was niet makkelijk maar wel heel effectief: het was zo interessant omdat het fysiek aantoonde dat 'to support and to be supported' vaak 1 beweging is, of wederkerig is.*

### Mapping exercise

Make a map of the ecosystem which surrounds you now in your studies or work life. Make the map in duo's, brainstorming what the elements could be.

**Tips:** Spaces are also possible elements on this map, outdoors and indoors, objects, materials, tools.

Family or kin too. So everything that is playing a role in your study life.

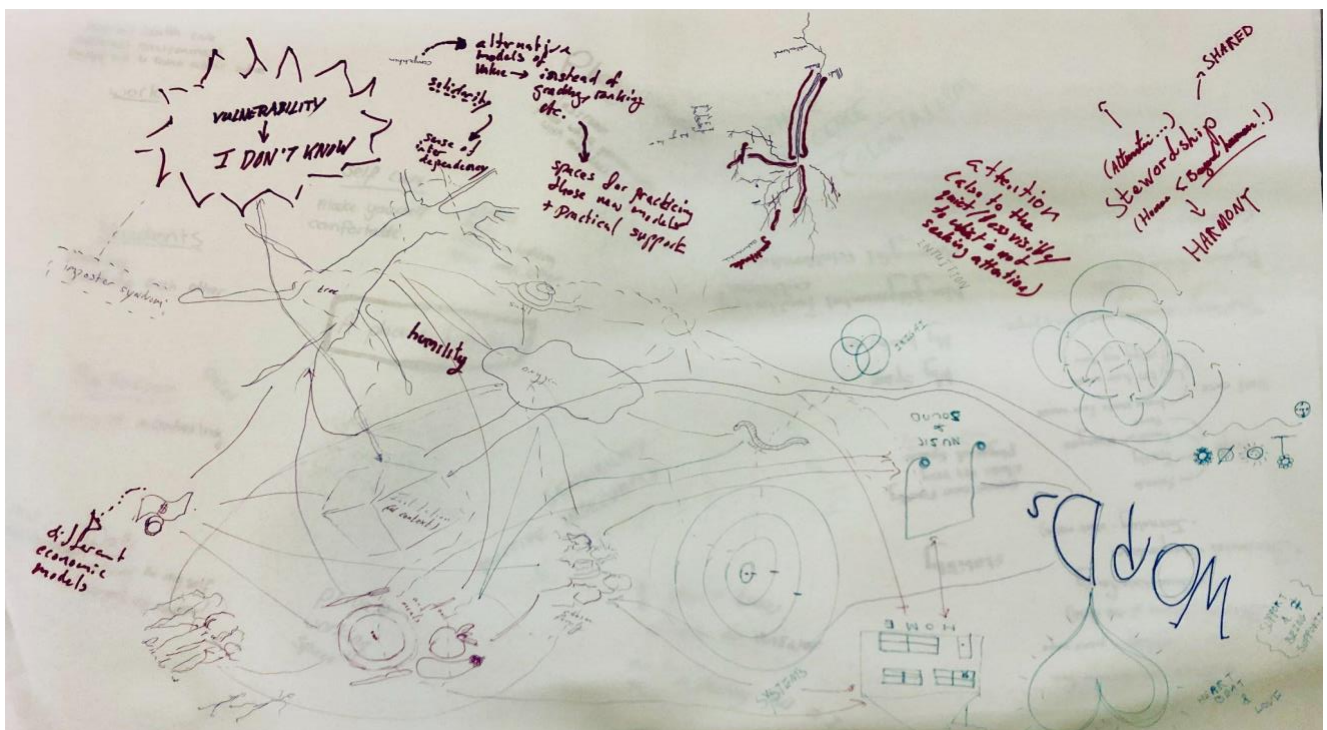
It might also be trees or mountains.

Or movement practice or sports.

- make the map in duos on 1 piece of paper
- use 2 colours, one for what is there, and then another for what is missing (what you wish was there but isn't).
- focus on your own map first, then look at what you have in common, what are the overlaps.

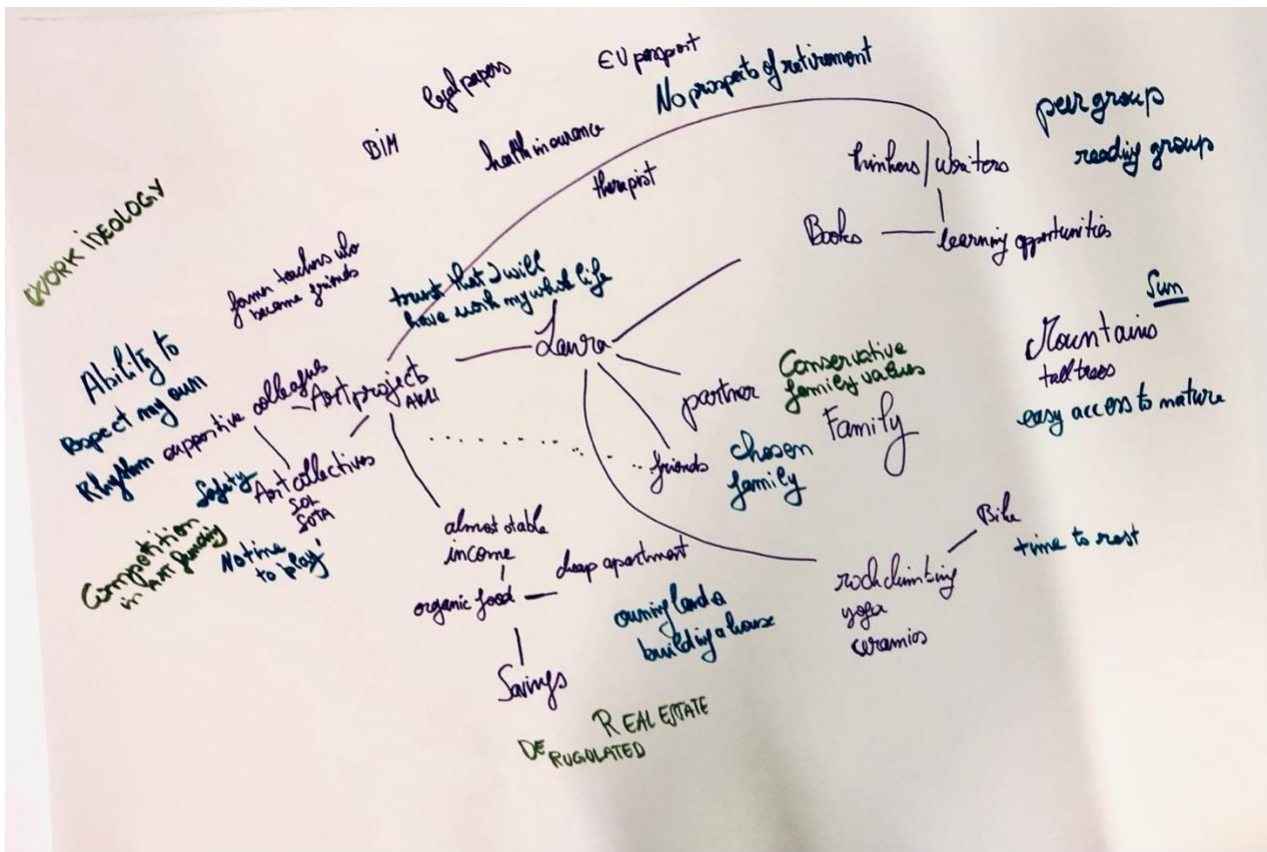
**Tips:** focus on where there is care and support, and what you need. Which relations need more care, which elements are missing?

Hannah: Deze opdracht wordt uitgelegd door Laura en met hetzelfde tweetal of drietal als tijdens de movement exercise gaan we aan de slag. Je gaat op de grond zitten of aan een tafel met je groepje. Ieder groepje pakt een vel papier en pennen en stiften in verschillende kleuren. De mensen die op de grond zitten, kunnen ook een yogamatje pakken ter ondersteuning. Als iedereen zit, legt Laura de opdracht uit. We gaan een ecology of care maken. Eerst gaan we brainstormen over wat er al is dat jou helpt en ondersteunt in jouw praktijk. Dit kan heel uiteenlopend zijn van mensen, plekken, materialen tot activiteiten. Het kan levend zijn, maar ook dood. Denk aan metaal, familie, bergen, je telefoon, papier tot je hond. Alles wat nu in je opkomt schrijf je op in kleur x. Wij gaan op ons vel in mindmap style te werk, maar dat wordt door iedereen anders geïnterpreteerd. Tijdens dit proces overleg ik ook al met mijn gesprekspartner. Hoewel niet alles overeenkomt schrijven we wel alles op en inspireren we elkaar tot nieuwe dingen om op te schrijven. Na een tijdje vertelt Laura nog een vraag om over na te denken, namelijk wat mist er in jouw ecology of care, wat mis je aan support en ondersteuning in jouw praktijk? Voor deze nieuwe vraag gebruiken we een andere kleur, kleur y. Het gesprek gaat verder in je groepje. De nieuwe vraag geeft een extra impuls aan het gesprek. Sommige dingen die je net al tegenkwam die je wel helpen en ondersteunen, zijn er bijvoorbeeld niet bij je gesprekspartner of zijn nog niet helemaal compleet. Na enige tijd wordt nog een nieuwe vraag door Laura geïntroduceerd, terwijl iedereen weer blijft zitten, namelijk welke (grotere) systemen beïnvloeden jouw praktijk? Dingen waar jij niks aan kan doen, maar die jou wel of niet helpen in je praktijk. Systemen die worden gestructureerd door de overheid, bepaalde ideeën in de maatschappij of normen en waarden die zijn voortgevloeid uit geloof. Deze vraag wordt weer in een andere kleur opgeschreven, kleur z. In het gesprek vergelijk je, stel je vragen en kom je erachter dat wat jij mist soms overeenkomt met wat de ander mist en soms ook helemaal niet.

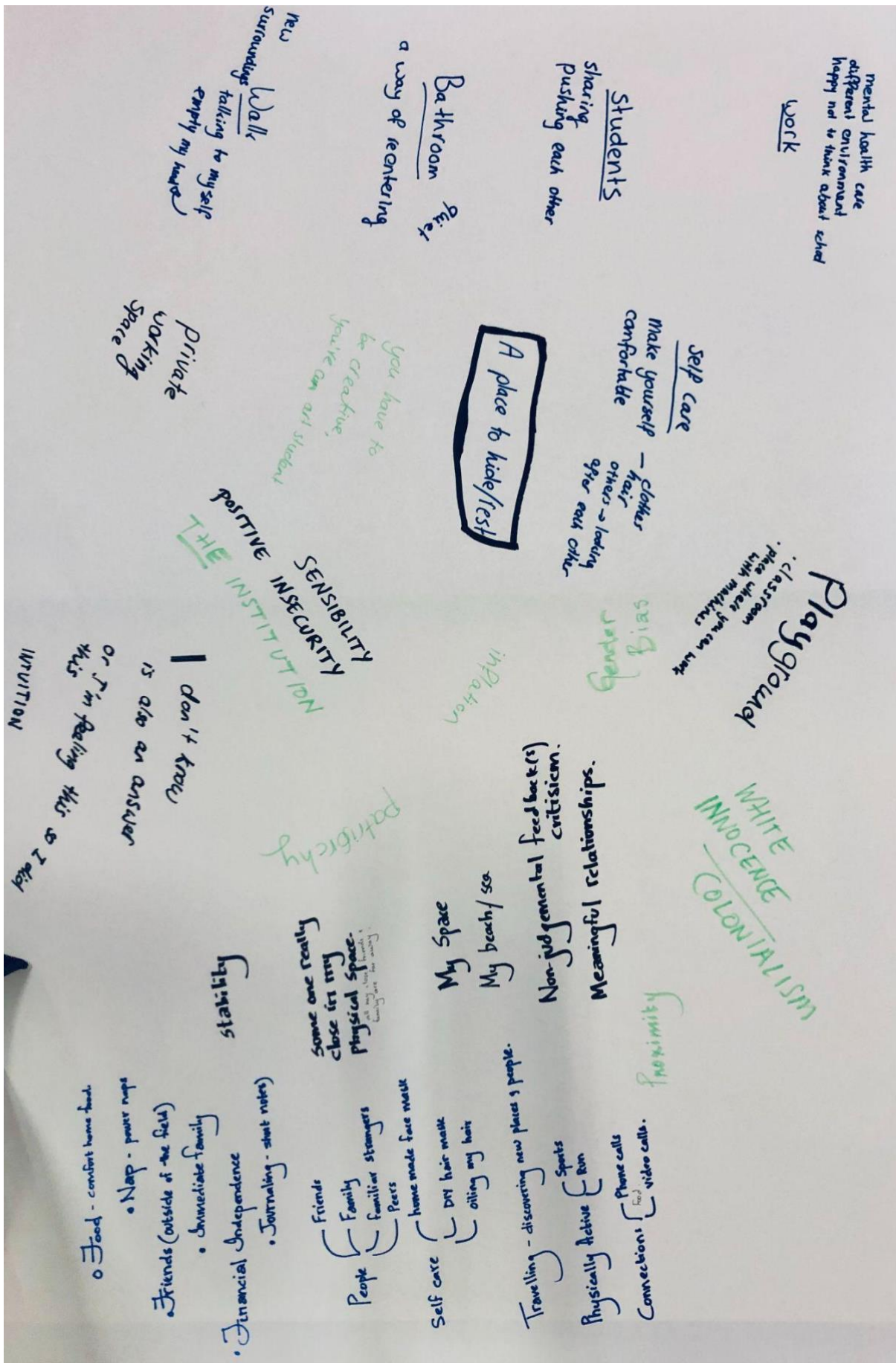


Map 1

Philippine over map 1: Wij begonnen in onze mapping al heel snel enorm uit te zoomen: zuurstof, bomen en de cosmos stonden al heel snel op ons vel papier, en toen was het niet makkelijk om terug te komen naar een meer persoonlijk niveau. We bleven een beetje in de concepten steken en vonden het moeilijk van daaruit concreet te worden. Uiteindelijk kwamen wel zaken als (t)huis, (samen) eten en muziek op papier, allemaal als elementen die 'community' mogelijk maken. Een ecosysteem als mycelium was een belangrijke notie, met bijbehorende voorwaarden zoals aandacht en bescheidenheid. Als gemis schreef iemand op: kwetsbaarheid, of de ruimte om het niet te weten. En het gebrek aan alternatieve manieren van waarderen op school, als in: anders dan de huidige competitieve modellen van 'grading and ranking'.



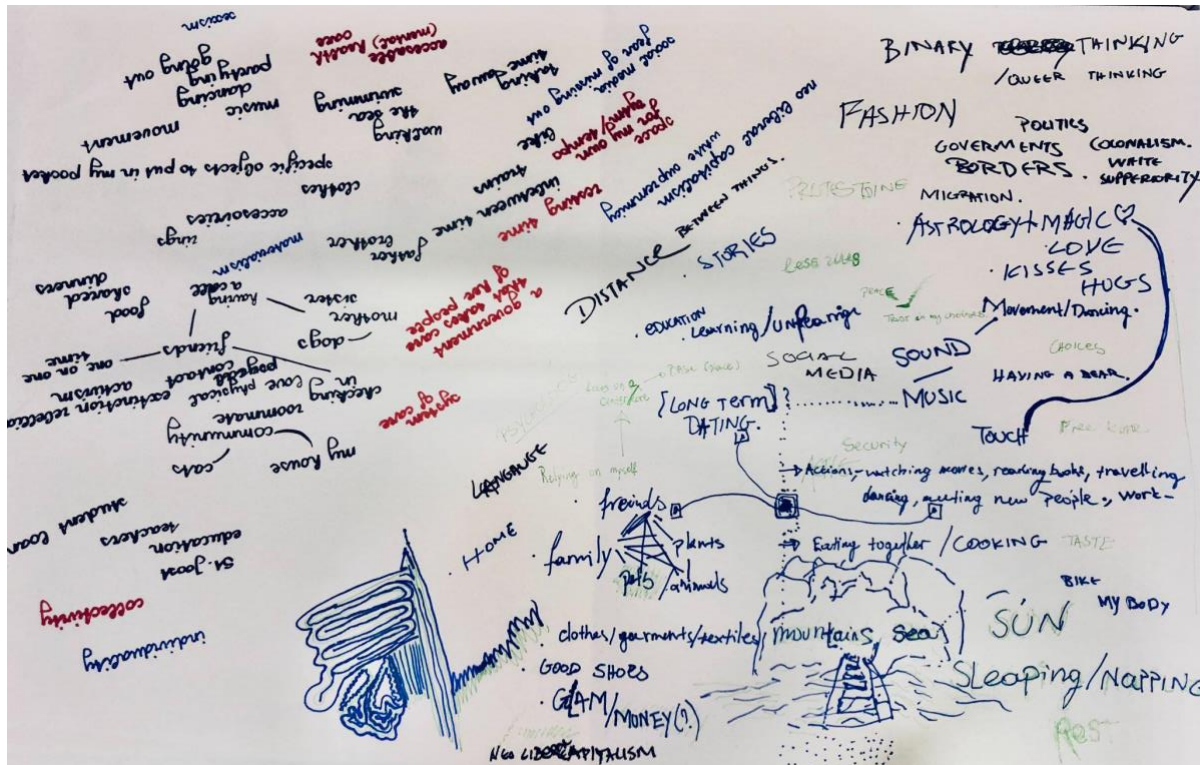
Map 2



Map 3

Hannah over map 3: Het is goed om deze opdracht met z'n tweeën of drieën te maken. Ons gesprek gaat over vrienden binnen en buiten de academie, familie, eten, dutjes en wandelingen die ons ondersteunen. Tijd in jezelf stoppen door maskertjes te maken voor je haar of gezicht en jezelf te kleden in comfortabele kleren voor op ongemakkelijke momenten. We missen bepaalde gerechten, het strand en de zee. Werkplaatsen waar alles mag en kan en waar je rustig het niet kan weten.

We missen werken vanuit gevoel, de ruimte om te kunnen zeggen dat je dit maakt omdat je voelde dat je dit moest gaan maken. De systemen die ons beïnvloeden zijn racisme en de verwachting dat jij anderen op hun gemak moet stellen, klimaatverandering, woningcrisis, kapitalisme, genderrollen, patriarchaat.



Map 4

#### Make a tour of other ecologies: have a look what other groups made.

Hannah: De tour of ecologies, bestaat er uit dat iedereen in stilte door de ruimte loopt om naar de andere mappings te kijken. Je komt tot stilstand en met een paar anderen sta je te kijken naar de wereld van een ander tweetal. Er is heel organisch geschreven op de bladen, met verschillende kleuren. Elk blad heeft een andere manier van noteren.

Philippine: Hoewel de mappings onderling heel verschillend zijn, zijn er ook wat interessante overeenkomsten. Opvallend vind ik bijvoorbeeld dat 'ruimte om het niet te weten' meerdere keren terugkomt. Verder zijn er grappige dingen als: 'goeie schoenen' en 'WC'.

Hannah: Daarna hebben we in de groep een gesprek over de gemaakte ecologies in pop-corn-stijl. Als er een gedachte in je opkomt, mag je dat meteen zeggen, zonder de beurt te krijgen. Je kan iets zeggen als iets in je opkomt. Het kan een opmerking zijn of een mening. Het hoeft niet tot een gesprek te leiden.

Mensen hebben niet zo veel te zeggen of voelen wat weerstand, want het blijft lang stil.

#### Break: two options.

1. Napping score: a 20-minute coordinated nap.
2. Or whatever you want/need: choose what will be your support tool for this break?

Hannah: Voor we het lokaal verlaten wordt een tijd benoemd dat we weer doorgaan. Sommigen verlaten het lokaal om een stukje te lopen, eten te zoeken of naar buiten te gaan, anderen doen met Philippine de napping score:

'6 COLLECTIVE DREAMING — Napping score. For 2 or more participants. Choose a place to lie down in proximity to one another. Take a coordinated 20 minute nap.'<sup>1</sup>

Philippine: We blijven met 4 mensen achter in het lokaal voor de napping score. We gaan snel liggen op de yogamatten want de tijd is al krap. Een van de deelnemers doet een voorstel voor een muziekje (ik heb de ervaring dat dat helpt om te ontspannen en in slaap te vallen dus dat is een vast toevoeging bij de score geworden: kies muziek uit en speel deze zachtjes of op een telefoon midden tussen de slapers). We liggen uiteindelijk maar 15 minuten maar de meesten slapen daadwerkelijk even en we worden opgefrist wakker.

<sup>1</sup> Uit 'Another Version: Thinking through performing,' P. Hoegen, Onomatopoe Publishers i.c.w. Caradt, 2020

## Collaborative guidelines / codes of conduct

Intro: an exercise to create tools for a more caring environment in which to work/learn/study together.

Let's situate where these guidelines are being applied: a class room. First we share the Collaboration Guidelines by Constant<sup>2</sup> (see print out), by reading them all together (circular reading style).

*Hannah: Als bijna iedereen er weer is gaan we verder. We zitten in een kring, op de grond, op de yogamat of op een stoel. Laura legt de Constant Collaboration Guidelines uit. Dit zijn richtlijnen voor samenwerking. De richtlijnen zorgen voor een veilig klimaat, zonder enige vorm van discriminatie, waar je naar elkaar luistert zonder oordeel en erkend wordt dat iedereen een ander niveau van vaardigheden heeft en andere meningen.*  
*De Constant guidelines staan in het boekje dat we hebben uitgedeeld aan alle participanten, maar dit is de korte versie, de lange versie voegt bij bepaalde richtlijnen extra verduidelijking. Laura lost dit gebrek aan de lange versie van de richtlijnen op door haar telefoon op te zoeken (ze staan online) en rond te geven. Ieder van ons in de kring leest tenminste een guideline voor.*

### Writing our own guidelines - in 3 groups

Now we will try to formulate our own guidelines.

We introduce the discussion tools that have been shared beforehand in the hand-out as possible discussion formats, and we suggest the following way of working:

**#1** - List the values of cooperation & oppressions you wish to address and deconstruct **(10min)**

**#2** - Dig deeper: Why is this important to you? What do you hope a guideline would produce? **(15min)**

**#3** - Write 4 or 5 guidelines. Think of the language you use, the sentence structure and which effect it might have on people, a group, a workplace. **(20min)**

Suggested angles:

#### 1. **Peers**

What kind of relations do you want to create amongst your peers? (Which are helpful and which are problematic relationships in peer care? What can you do to create careful dynamics with your peers?)

#### 2. **Institution**

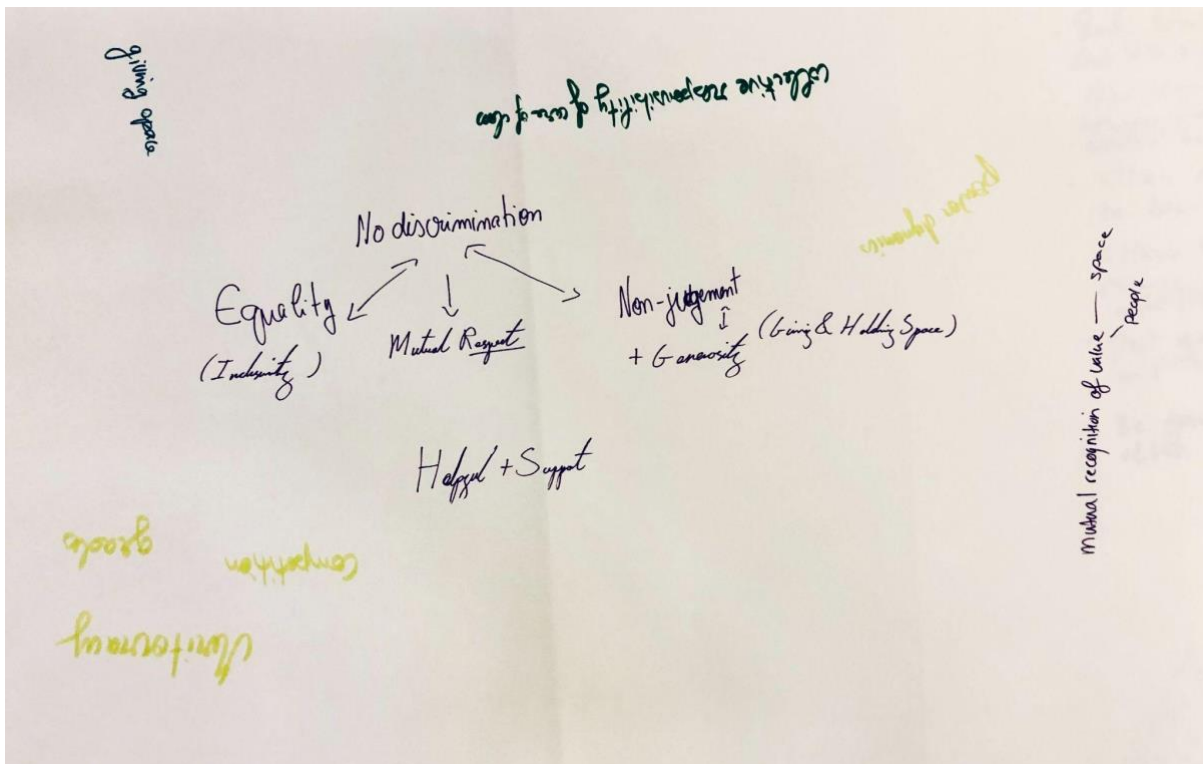
What kind of relations do you want to create with the classroom itself (as a physical space and as an institutional context) and to those who decide what can happen to that physical space? (What kinds of structural oppressions do we want to deconstruct? What could physical and institutional care-full relations be? How can the different parties contribute to that?)

#### 3. **Power dynamics/relations**

What kind of relationships between people with different power statuses do you want to create. (How do students want to work with teachers / teachers with students / staff members with ...., How can the different parties contribute to that?)

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<sup>2</sup> Constant, richtlijnen voor samenwerking, zesde versie uit 8-11-2022, [Collaboration Guidelines: An Update - Constant \(constantvzw.org\)](https://constantvzw.org), zie [bijlage](#).



Guidelines group 3 facilitated by Hannah

Hannah: Laura verdeelt de groepen door 1,2,3 langs de kring te doen. 1 staat bijvoorbeeld voor groep Laura, 2 voor Philippine en 3 voor Hannah.

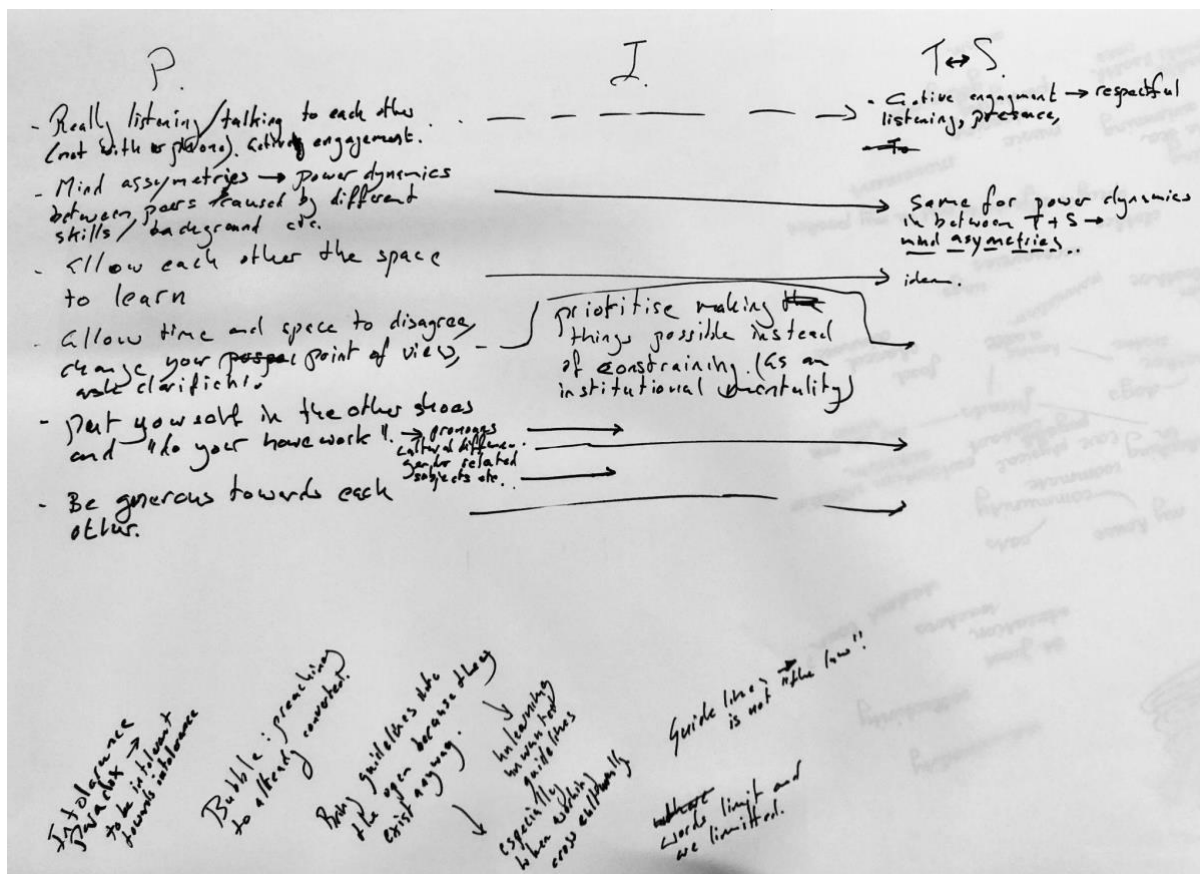
Dan zitten we met z'n vieren op de grond met een vel papier in ons midden, vier pennen en praten we over de richtlijnen. Iedereen blijft in het lokaal. In onze groep zit een student en docent die vroeger in deze machtsstructuur samen hebben gewerkt, de docent vraagt aan de student of die het oké vindt dat ze samen in een groep zitten. Zonder consent wil de docent ook ruilen met iemand uit een andere groep, maar dat hoeft niet, de student vindt het geen probleem. Dit gesprek tussen de twee gebeurt centraal in onze groep van vier.

Iemand heeft al een keer met Dragon Dreaming<sup>3</sup> gewerkt en zou daar graag nog een keer mee werken. De anderen zijn ook nieuwsgierig naar Dragon Dreaming, dus kiezen we deze 'gespreks tool' uit. We besluiten de beschrijving te lezen. De groep vindt het lastig om tijdens het lezen ook meteen te begrijpen wat er bedoeld wordt met de opdracht. Dus stoppen we geregeld en bespreken we kort wat er staat. Na de instructie gelezen te hebben, concluderen we dat we wat we tijdens het maken van de mapping exercise misten nu moeten omzetten in een droom om zo tot een guideline te komen. We vinden het moeilijk om van gemis naar droom te gaan. Er wordt in eerste instantie dan ook nog veel gemis gedeeld.

Dingen die naar boven komen zijn het gebruik van taal. Kunnen we ook niet-taal gebruiken? Ik zeg dat we dat al doen, want je praat ook non-verbaal met elkaar, zoals met de handen. Bedoel je misschien ook een manier van praten zoals de tool in de hand-out dat gaat over hand signals?

Iemand komt met een voorbeeld, een dilemma waar we gedragsrichtlijnen voor proberen te bedenken. We hebben het ook over voornaamwoorden en hoe je mensen benadert en daarin fouten maakt. Hoe is die balans van wel fouten mogen maken, met de kans dat je daar mensen mee pijn doet? Tijdens dit gesprek wordt er bijna niet meer over dromen gesproken en worden er ook nog geen eigen richtlijnen geschreven. Af en toe schrijft iemand iets op op het vel, maar dat zijn meer steekwoorden dan richtlijnen.

<sup>3</sup> Dragon Dreaming - Dream Circle, bedacht door John Croft, zie bijlage.



Guidelines group 2 facilitated by Philippine

Philippine: In onze groep gebruiken we geen gespreks tool, en laten we ook #1, 2 en 3 een beetje links liggen. We focussen ons op de 3 voorgestelde categorieën: Peer group, Institution en Student-Teacher. De uitkomsten zijn vrij concreet dus ik typ ze hier uit:

### 1. Peer group:

- Really listen / talk to each other (instead of with your phone). Active engagement.
- Mind asymmetries, meaning power dynamics between peers due to different skills, backgrounds etc.
- Allow each other the space to learn.
- Allow time and space to disagree, change your point of view. Ask for clarifications.
- Put yourself in the other's shoes and "do your homework" (pronouns, cultural differences, gender related subjects etc.)
- Be generous towards each other.

### 2. Institution:

- Prioritise making things possible instead of constraining (as an institutional mentality.)

### 3. Teacher-Student:

- Active engagement, respectful listening, presence etc (in both directions).
- Mind asymmetries, meaning dynamics between peers and between teachers and students, due to different skills, backgrounds etc.
- Allow each other the space to learn.
- Allow time and space to disagree, change your point of view. Ask for clarifications.
- Put yourself in the other's shoes and "do your homework" (pronouns, cultural differences, gender related subjects etc.)
- Be generous towards each other.

Zoals te lezen valt, vinden we dat de richtlijnen die voor de peer group gelden, ook van toepassing zijn op student-docent relaties.

Share the guidelines (the outcomes of these group sessions) with the whole group + round of reflection.

Followed by closing and Check-out: round or group conversation. (Choose what you'd like to talk about: Use some of the hand signals? No interrupting.)

- impressions?

- which tools worked?
- which tools might be missing or you realise would be supportive to bring in?
- how do you feel?

*Hannah: Als de tijd voorbij is keren we onze hoofden om centraal te vertellen wat voor richtlijnen we hebben bedacht. Vanuit het team wordt gevraagd of het goed is dat we de gemaakte richtlijnen voorlezen als alle mensen beneden weer tezamen komen of tijdens de rondes in de avond. Er wordt afgesproken dat een paar richtlijnen zeker kunnen worden gedeeld.*

*Daarna doen we de check-out.*

## Finish

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### Avondprogramma Studium Generale:

Na afloop van de workshop voegen we ons bij de grote groep van deelnemers, facilitators en organisatoren van het Studium Generale voor een gezamenlijk diner. Daarna worden we in groepen verdeeld voor een gesprek in fishbowl formaat.

### Fishbowl gesprek

*Hannah: Als het eten klaar is, verzamelen we in de grote zaal beneden en daar worden workshops met elkaar gelinkt om ervaringen te kunnen delen. We moeten veel trappen op. We zitten dan in een lokaal met deelnemers en facilitators van drie verschillende workshops. Het gesprek zal volgens de fishbowl techniek plaatsvinden. In het midden zullen vijf mensen zitten in een rondje en praten over hun workshop en ervaringen. Daaromheen is een veel grotere kring van zittende mensen die aan een van de drie workshops heeft meegedaan of ze hebben gegeven. Je kan iemand op een van die vijf stoelen aantikken als je wilt meedoen aan het gesprek. Die persoon staat dan op en je neemt hun plek in. Mensen begrijpen niet zo goed waarom het gesprek in het Engels moet. Dat moet een paar keer uitgelegd worden (omdat niet iedereen Nederlandstalig is). Het kringgesprek loopt, maar mensen uit de grote kring willen nog niet zo snel ruilen, waardoor het gesprek eerst heel lang over één workshop gaat en de kruisbestuiving lange tijd uitblijft.*

*Philippine: Ik vond het moeilijk in het gesprek te raken. In het eerste deel werd er over songlines gesproken op een manier die me als problematisch voorkwam, een vorm van 'cultural appropriation', maar ik vond niet de ingang om het aan te kaarten, het leek me niet productief op dat moment.*

*De gesprekken bestonden vooral uit rapporteren van wat er was gedaan in de workshops. Ik was onder de indruk dat toen onze workshop aan bod kwam, deelnemers van de workshop (studenten) op eigen initiatief plaats namen in de fishbowl en er adequaat over konden vertellen. Tegelijk was het interessante informatie voor ons om te horen welke zaken ze eruit pikten, en welke ze niet benoemden.*

### Tot slot: gesprek terug in de workshop groep na de fishbowl

*Philippine: Na de fishbowl zijn we als groep weer bij elkaar gekomen in het lokaal. Niet iedereen was daarbij maar wel de meerderheid. Vooral de studenten waren aan het woord, ze dachten hardop na over hun ervaringen van student-docent relaties, hier en daar beklagden ze zich, maar ze spraken ook uit over hoe ze zich het perspectief van docenten voorstelden. We vroegen ook om feedback op de workshop algemeen. Mensen waren heel positief. Ze vonden het wel intens, vooral door de lengte, maar maakten duidelijk dat de workshop beantwoordt aan een gevoeld gemis, dat (vooral de studenten) honger hebben aan meer van dit soort gesprekken en dat de onderwerpen urgent voor ze zijn. (Als voorbeeld een zin uit een email die ik achteraf ontving:*

*"30 maart heb ik jullie workshop What is Care and How Do We Do It? gevolgd. Het heeft me veel grond gegeven om op te staan en het maakte me gretig voor meer.")*

### Algemene reflectie op de dag

*Philippine: De insteek van de dag (onderwijs instituut als 'ecology of learning') werkte goed als raamwerk voor een studium generale, het gaf frisse lucht en energie en het opent de weg voor een type studium generale die relevanter en urgenter kan zijn voor studenten en voor het hele instituut.*

*Wat ik miste was cohesie tussen de workshops/tracks. En ook was voor mij niet bij alle workshops duidelijk hoe ze het thema geadresseerden, of in elk geval leken ze niet allemaal het thema zo te adresseren dat het voor studenten en instituut bijdroeg aan het in de praktijk brengen van een (gewenste) ecology of learning: hoe daar handvatten aan te geven of een discours hierover op gang te brengen.*

Bijlagen:

# What is Care and How do we Do It?

## Collective care and the ecosystem

With Laura Oriol, Hannah Wierda en Philippine Hoegen

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# Collaboration Guidelines

<https://constantvzw.org/site/?w=https://constantvzw.org/wefts/orientationspourcollaboration.en.html>

*This is the sixth version of Constant Collaboration Guidelines (08/11/2022). These guidelines will be used and discussed in different environments, situations and constellations. We will then update them for the next worksession, May 2023. Please leave your comments and questions (anonymous or not): [hier/ici/here](#).*

## Commitment

Constant is a non-profit, artist-run organisation based in Brussels since 1997 and active in-between art, media and technology. Constant develops, investigates and experiments. Constant departs from feminisms, copyleft, Free/Libre + Open Source Software and works on those vectors through an intersectional perspective. [More about Constant](#)

Constant is committed to environments where possible futures, complex collectivities and desired technologies can be experimented. The spaces that we initiate are therefore explicitly opposed to sexism, racism, queer antagonism, ableism and other kinds of oppression. Our positioning is one of risk-taking and trial and error in which rigour and critique meet with humour, insecurity, tension, ambiguity and mistakes. Fearless, brave environments empower radical complexity.

Departing from feminisms means for Constant to be attentive to the sometimes generative, often oppressive arrangements of power, privilege and difference. We understand these arrangements to be related to gender and always to intersect with issues of for example class, race and ability. Finding ways to come to terms with the long colonial history of computation, the way technology impacts ecology, and the relations between them, deserves our ongoing attention.

Constant attempts to operate from inclusivity rather than exclusivity. We want our work to take very different human beings and their own universes into account but also to include historical and future other-than-human agents. This means to keep challenging our assumptions and to welcome being challenged about ways we might be able to address the intersections of privilege, power, history, culture, inequality, pain, and injustice.

The past years have confirmed that governmental laws/regulations/measures have often been out of sync with actual needs... so be ready to re-discuss collectively how to relate to these, we encourage to proactively express discomfort / sense it with the others around you.

Constant supports Free Culture because it is a way to acknowledge that culture is a collective effort that deserves to be shared. There is no tabula rasa, no original author; there is a genealogy and a web of references though. When it comes to technology, we think Free Software can make a difference because we are invited to consider, interrogate and discuss the technical details of software and hardware, or when we want to engage with its concepts, politics and histories. Over the last years, we have come to the realisation that being affirmative of Free Culture has to come with more critical considerations. We want to take into account the links of Open Access ideology to colonial extractivism which can obstruct the imagination of complexity and porosity. In addition we want to take into account the rights to opacity in access and transmission of knowledge, especially in regard to marginalized communities. As a result, Constant and our allies have written a license which tries to address these considerations. We are

experimenting with this license and now distribute all Constant's work under the [Collective Conditions for \(Re\)use](#) license.

This is the sixth version of the commitment after its first publication in October 2019. The Constant Collaboration Guidelines are an active articulation that stays open to corrections and modifications throughout time and throughout welcome modulations in Constant's constellation.

## Collaboration Guidelines

We wrote a short and a long version of the guidelines. We invite you to read both carefully.

These guidelines relate to public and non-public activities that Constant organises. They can be short term or quasi permanent, ranging from drinks in the office to small events in our workspace, on-line meetings or multi-day worksessions, which is the most common occasion for these guidelines to appear.

Worksessions are intensive transdisciplinary situations to which participants from all over the world contribute. Because of the intensity of exchanges and interactions during worksessions, there can be moments of disagreement and discomfort. These moments need to be acknowledged and discussed, within your own limits. [More about worksessions](#)

Even if some of the below guidelines sound obvious, we have experienced that being together can be complicated. We have written these guidelines to think of ways to be together comfortably and attentively. Furthermore, by addressing the guidelines as part of each worksession, we hope to create dynamic ways to keep training our abilities to expand and strengthen braver spaces. The guidelines are meant to create potentiality for all, and sometimes this is done by restricting the space taken by some.

### Collaboration Guidelines - Short Version

Collaborators with and within Constant take the following into account:

- **Refusing and deconstructing sexism, racism, queer antagonism, ableism, ageism and other kinds of oppression.**
- **Leaving physical, emotional and conceptual room for other people.**
- **Respecting other beings, present or not, human or not.**
- **Caring for physical and digital environments.**
- **Avoiding to speak for others.**
- **Try to not be solely guided by your preconceptions.**
- **Taking time to actually listen.**
- **Asking before assuming.**
- **Welcoming multiple processes of (un)learning. The exchange of information, experience and knowledge comes in many forms.**
- **Accepting differences. Appreciating divergence in pace, points of view, backgrounds, references, needs and limits.**
- **Recognizing that words and ways of speaking impact people in various ways.**
- **Caring for language gaps. This is a multi-lingual environment.**
- **Using Free, Libre and Open Source software whenever possible.**
- **Asking for explicit consent before sharing photographs or recordings on proprietary social networks.**
- **The default license for all material and documentation is a Free Art License.**
- **Knowing that taking all of the above into account is sometimes easier said than done.**

## Collaboration Guidelines - Long version

Constant activities are moments of exchange, in which different generous practices develop. Giving, receiving, taking and caring are understood as reciprocal actions. Each time we will make time and space for these guidelines. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Refusing and deconstructing sexism, racism, queer antagonism, ableism, ageism and other kinds of oppression.**
- **Leaving physical, emotional and conceptual room for other people.** We respect the emotional and physical limits of people around us. This means we change our behaviour if someone signals to not be at ease with our behaviour, whatever our intentions.
- **Respecting other beings, present or not, human or not.** We try to respect the dignity, experiences, and perspectives of those that are implicated by the work we do. It is very possible that those affected are not in the room with us.
- **Caring for your physical and digital environment.** We pay attention to the people, facilities, infrastructures and objects brought together and treat them with the necessary care.
- **Avoiding to speak for others.** Make space, instead of intruding or imposing yourself. We are solidary with others, but we take care that they can speak for themselves. Finishing other peoples' sentences is almost always meant as a sign of support, but it is actually not helpful, unless it is asked for.
- **Try to not be solely guided by your preconceptions.** Collective work is exciting, challenging, de-centering, alienating and triggering. We each do what we need to do to navigate our mental, emotional, and physical well-being. If we are feeling a bit too dis-oriented or judgmental, we might leave the room for a while, but we will try to come back.
- **Taking time to actually listen.**
- **Asking before assuming.** For example what someone's preferred pronoun is, if they want to be touched, whether they know anything about a subject. If we are unsure, we ask for clarity. We also understand that not all questions are OK, or need answering.
- **Welcoming multiple processes of (un)learning. The exchange of information, experiences and knowledge comes in many forms.** We pay attention to the way different types of expertise are valued, specifically when it comes to technology. We know that often, the arrangement of expertise re-enforces existing power relations (e.g., teacher-student hierarchy; privileges carried by whiteness, socio-economic/class, gender, heterosexuality ...; communication or language skills; mental or physical ability; seniority as a participant, etc.). We try to avoid \*splaining, techno-solutionism ... and other forms of normative behaviour.
- **Accepting differences. Appreciating divergence in pace, points of view, backgrounds, references, needs and limits.** We are here because we value occasions to engage with other perspectives. This might mean to try out different content, and also different methods of sharing. It sometimes means requesting dignity/respect/consideration for those who are not here.
- **Recognizing that words and ways of speaking impact people in various ways.** What you are saying is differently understood by each person. Our listening is conditioned differently, socially, linguistically, emotionally. That why it is good to assume that what you intended to say might not be understood exactly as such.
- **Caring for language gaps. This is a multi-lingual environment.** We try to remember that we are in Brussels, a multi-lingual city that is officially operating with two languages (French and Dutch), but in practice communicates in many more tongues. Even if we make use of English as a lingua franca, we all bring different languages and vocabularies so we understand that everyone experiences very different levels of comfort while speaking and writing. Native English speakers must understand that their own ease in expressing themselves (particularly in terms of specialized vocabulary and speed) might provoke unease for non-native speakers.
- **Using Free, Libre and Open Source software whenever possible.** We understand that Constant is committed to Free / Libre and Open Source Software, and we make an effort to use F/LOSS tools as

much as possible. If we notice a companion struggle with yet un-known tools and procedures, we make an effort to help out.

- **Asking for explicit consent before sharing photographs or recordings on proprietary social networks.** As part of a shared documentation effort, pictures, audio and video will be recorded during worksessions and other collective situations. Until we have found a better solution, we will practice delayed publishing, and allow participants time to decide before sharing materials on-line.
- **The default license for all material and documentation is the Collective Conditions for (Re)use (CC4r).** For collaborative work such as worksessions, auto-documentation and a generous exchange of ideas and knowledge is key. For this reason, we acknowledge that the default license for shared work, notes, prototypes, sketches generated in the context of the worksession is the CC4r. If we need an exception to this rule, we take responsibility to inform other participants about it.
- **Knowing that taking all of the above into account is sometimes easier said than done.** When anyone breaks these guidelines, we work to not take it personally. We all have been conditioned into systems of oppression and we are unlearning; this makes us uncomfortable and we try not to expect neat, tidy solutions.

**Harassment is unacceptable** and will not be tolerated during any Constant event, meeting or gathering. This goes for all online, collective or one-on-one communications. Harassment is what people experience it to be. It doesn't matter how the person harassing intended their action, important is how it was experienced. We understand that it is important to make explicit what counts as harrassment, but we are not used to this language. We have for now used quotes from guidelines and codes of conduct that we have been informed by.

Harassment includes:

- trolling, i.e. sustained disruption of conversations, talks or other events. [1]
- nonconsensual photography or recording including logging online activity for harassment purposes. [2]
- gratuitous or off-topic use of nudity and/or sexual images in public spaces (including presentation slides). [1]
- deliberate intimidation, stalking or following. [1]
- nonconsensual physical contact and simulated physical contact (e.g., textual descriptions like “*hug*” or “*backrub*”) without consent or after a request to stop. [2]
- patterns of inappropriate social contact, such as requesting/assuming inappropriate levels of intimacy with others. [2]
- unwelcome sexual attention. [3]
- microaggressions, i.e. small, subtle actions that marginalize people. [1]
- comments that reinforce systemic oppression related to gender, gender identity and expression, trans status, sexual orientation, dis-ability, mental illness, neurodiversity, physical appearance, body size, age, race, or religion (or lack thereof), technical choices, lack of technical knowledge, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. [2]
- unwelcome comments regarding a person's lifestyle choices and practices, including those related to food, health, parenting, drugs, and employment. [2]
- deliberate misgendering. [2]
- deliberate use of “dead” or rejected names. [2]
- incitement and threats of violence towards any individual, including encouraging a person to commit suicide or to engage in self-harm. [2]
- continued one-on-one communication after requests to cease. [3]
- deliberate “outing” of any private aspect of a person's identity without their consent except as necessary to protect vulnerable people from intentional abuse. [3]
- publication of private communication without consent. [2]
- knowingly making false claims about a person. [2]

[1] <https://queer-code.org/coc>

[2] <https://www.freebsd.org/internal/code-of-conduct.html>

[3] <https://radix.one/en/code-of-conduct>

## Flagging incidents and dealing with problems

We take collective responsibility to respond to transgressions, and try to avoid focusing on judging and being or feeling judged.

Does the situation require immediate intervention or not?

Immediate intervention (help is needed now!)

If we are feeling unsafe or seeing someone who seems in distress, we can immediately find the Constant members who will introduce themselves as the organisers of the worksessions. They will do their best to help, or to find the correct assistance if relevant/necessary.

Non-immediate intervention (a situation that requires more time)

Other violations need to be considered and consulted upon with more people or in a more measured way. For example: If someone experiences an ongoing pattern of harassment; if an unacceptable behaviour is witnessed; if somebody keeps “accidentally” using discriminatory language, after being asked to stop. If we feel comfortable or able, we discuss the issues with the involved parties before consulting an organiser. We prefer to constructively resolve disagreements together and work to right the wrong, when it is possible and safe to do so. However, if the problems still persist, find a Constant member who will do their best to unlock the situation. It is also possible to contact us afterwards to signal us what had happened if acting in the moment does not feel right/safe. Send an email to: [beep@constantvzw.org](mailto:beep@constantvzw.org) A Constant team member who is not in the organisational team will receive your email. Information will be handled with sensitivity.

If we run into conflict with one of these guidelines, or when we see that others are flagging our behavior:

- we do not fuel the conflict.
- we speak with each other.
- we step out of the room and breathe.
- we apologise.
- we come back with a renewed engagement to collaborate.
- if we continue to transgress the guidelines, we will be asked to leave.

Last modified: 2022-11-08

# Popcorn Brainstorming

(see <https://www.sessionlab.com/library> also for more)

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## Instructions

A classic brainstorming technique, Popcorn Brainstorming taps into the energy of group idea generation by getting everyone in the room to contribute simultaneously.

- **Step 1**

Organize your group into a circle and write a problem statement or framing question on the flipchart. This will be the subject of the brainstorm. Give everyone a minute to reflect before you start the next step.

- **Step 2**

Start brainstorming! Invite everyone to contribute ideas out loud. Go quickly, keep ideas moving, and have one person take notes on the flipchart.

- **Step 3**

Stop when no more ideas are coming out or when the group has nothing else to offer. As a team, review the assembled ideas and briefly discuss and debrief.

You may want to follow this method with a voting session, where each person votes on the best ideas to move forward with, or move towards idea development.

## Variant - Round Robin Brainstorming

For groups who may want to brainstorm in a more relaxed and structured manner, the Round Robin brainstorming variant is a great way to generate ideas!

- **Step 1**

Organize your group into a circle and write a problem statement or framing question on the flipchart. This will be the subject of the brainstorm. Hand everyone an index card and set a stack of index cards in the middle of the table. Give everyone a minute to reflect before you start the next step.

- **Step 2**

Start brainstorming! Invite everyone to write ideas relating to the central problem statement or question on their index card.

When they've written an idea, they then pass the index card to the next person. Each participant then writes a new idea based on the index card they were passed. Hand the previous index card into the middle of the table and pass the new idea to the next participant. Repeat as necessary!

- **Step 3**

Stop when no more ideas are coming out or when the group has nothing else to offer. As a team, review the assembled ideas and briefly discuss and debrief.

You may want to follow this method with a voting session, where each person votes on the best ideas to move forward with, or move towards idea development.

## Dream Circle - Dragon Dreaming

Dragon Dreaming is a process for creating and achieving collective dreams, which involves four phases: dreaming, planning, doing, and celebrating.

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### Goal

1. **Create a shared vision:** that reflects the shared vision and aspirations of the group. This can help to build a sense of ownership and commitment to the project among all participants.
  2. **Build trust within the group:** an opportunity for participants to share their ideas and feelings in a safe and supportive space.
  3. **Experience the benefits of collective work:** By sharing dreams and ideas and working together to create a shared vision. The dream circle is a chance to experience the magic of working together as a group towards a common goal.
- 

### Instructions

This activity is designed to help a group of people create a collective vision by sharing and discussing their individual dreams in a safe and supportive space. By engaging in this process, participants will have the opportunity to learn about the foundations of trust and how to build it within a group, and to experience the magic of collective work.

Step-by-Step Instructions:

**Identify a dream or project** that you would like to share with the group. It could be anything from painting a room to starting a new business or taking a weekend trip with friends. *(In this case: creating Collaborative guidelines / codes of conduct.)*

1. **Invite** a group of people to participate in the dream circle. These could be friends, family, colleagues, or anyone else who is interested in the project and can support it with their skills and knowledge. Consider including people who you want to work with and who may be affected by the project if it has a broader scope. Aim for a group of 8, but any size is fine.
2. **Create a collective dream.** This process involves sharing individual dreams and working together to create a shared vision. It's important to note that the individual dream will "die" in order to be reborn as a group dream, as working for the group project rather than just your own can significantly change your relationship to it.
3. **Sit in a circle** and begin with a relaxation exercise or introduction. The initiator of the circle should then present their dream and explain the project.
4. **Equal Sharing:** Give everyone the opportunity to contribute their own dreams by asking generative questions, such as "What would this project have to be like for you to say it was the best use of your time?" It's important to make it clear that there is no judgement and all dreams are welcome, even the dreams that are contradictory.
5. **Starting with someone** in the circle, have participants present their answers, one dream at a time. If someone has nothing to add at a particular moment, they can pass and the circle can continue.
6. **Record every dream** shared in the dream circle on flip chart paper, either with one person writing for everyone or with the task shared among the group. Be sure to capture the name and essence of each message, rather than every word.
7. When everyone has shared their dreams and feels they have nothing more to add, the dream circle is finished. Declare the end of the circle and read the whole dream in the past tense as a story that has already happened.
8. Use the dream that the group has created together as inspiration for where they want to go as a group. The next phase is planning, where the group can be realistic and decide together how to make as many dreams as possible come true.

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## Background

Dragon Dreaming is a process that was developed by John Croft, an Australian environmental scientist and social innovator. It was inspired by his work with indigenous communities in Australia and his studies of permaculture and systems thinking. The process combines elements of traditional indigenous dreaming practices with modern project management techniques to create a holistic and sustainable approach to goal-setting and problem-solving. It has been used in a variety of settings, including community development, education, and business.

### Hand signals

Hand signals are agreed gestures or shapes that people make with their hands, to communicate in a non-verbal way (e.g. "I want to speak", "I agree", "I don't understand" etc.)

Using hand signals can make workshops and meetings run more smoothly and help the facilitator see emerging agreements and common ground.

There are lots of different hand signals out there, and groups use them in many different ways. They work a lot better if everyone is clear about which signals to use in the session and what exact purpose they have.

For some people hand signals will feel alienating, artificial, or 'like being at school'. These people might become less keen to participate, not more! Notice what's going on in your group, and if the tools aren't having the effect you wanted, try something else.

We find it best to use a small number of hand signals that are clearly explained at the beginning of the meeting. We often find just two signals sufficient: a raised hand or forefinger for wanting to speak, and waving your hands in the air to say you agree.

#### **'I want to contribute to the discussion.'**

Raise a hand or forefinger when you wish to contribute to the discussion with a general point.



#### **'I agree' or 'Sounds good'.**

When you hear an opinion that you agree with, wave your hands with your fingers pointing upwards by the sides of your body, around shoulder/face height. This lets everyone see how many people agree and saves a lot of time as people don't have to say "I'd just like to add that I agree with...". The gesture comes from British Sign Language where it means applause.



### **Direct Response**

Raise both forefingers if your point is a direct response to a point that's just been made or a question that's just been asked. This allows you to jump to the head of the queue, in front of all those people raising just one finger.



It is best to reserve direct response for occasions where there is a clear advantage to the group of your point being heard first. For example, you could use it to interrupt a conversation about train times, by pointing out the trains are on strike and you will need to catch the bus. This option can easily be over-used if people don't fully understand how it is different from raising a single hand.

### Language

Make an L shape with your thumb and forefinger to request translation, or to ask someone to use simpler language. This can be especially helpful in any multi-lingual group.

Some groups use 'C' for 'clarification' in a similar way.



### Technical point

Make a T shape using both hands. We've seen this used in a variety of ways by different groups, so always check you have a shared understanding. One use of 'technical point' is to interrupt the discussion with urgent factual information not related to the meeting (e.g. 'Lunch is ready', 'Can someone help me set up the tea urn for the break.') Another is to jump the queue with a facilitation suggestion, e.g. 'Can we break into small groups for this conversation?'



### Proposal

Make the shape of the letter P to show that you have a proposal.

Note: some groups use P to signal a point of process (a suggestion about the facilitation of the meeting).



### Hand signals to use with caution

Some hand signals can be disempowering. For example, some groups use gestures for 'I disagree' and 'You've been speaking too long'. In general it's less hurtful to communicate these messages in words. We have included some other hand signals below and explained why we have at times found them problematic.

### Speak Up

Wave your hands upwards to ask the speaker to speak louder. Very helpful in large groups. For someone who is already nervous about speaking in front of a large group this may add more pressure.



### I'm confused

Wriggle your fingers in front of your face if you want to tell the speaker and facilitator that you don't understand the content of the discussion. The sign can come across quite negative to the speaker, and an L shape for language or a C shape for clarification can be



a more neutral way of signalling the need for explanation.

## **Veto**

A raised fist expresses a major objection or veto to a proposal. In a large group of 50 or 100 people it can be helpful to have a specific signal for blocking a proposal, as otherwise someone's major objection may be missed. In smaller groups it may be better for the facilitator to ask people to raise their hand if they have a major objection / veto/ block to a proposal, as the raised fist is quite a strong gesture to use and may increase tension in the group.



## **Slow down**

Wave your hands downwards if you want the speaker to slow down. This can be helpful for example in meetings where someone is translating what the speaker is saying into other languages.

However, some groups use a very similar hand signal for showing disagreement, you need to be clear when and how to use it.



## **Tips for making hand signals work**

**Think carefully about how many hand signals you actually need.** It is tempting to have hand-signals for everything from 'tea break' to 'I want to make a proposal'. However, if you stick to just a few signals, people are more likely to remember what you agreed they would mean.

**Explain the hand signals in use clearly at the start of the session.** This makes it less intimidating for someone who's turned up new, and doesn't understand what's going on! It also prevents situations where people are using the same signal to mean different things.

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