

# Practice-Led Approaches to Research Design

Dr Jake Watts – PGT Methods for Contemporary Artistic Research Project

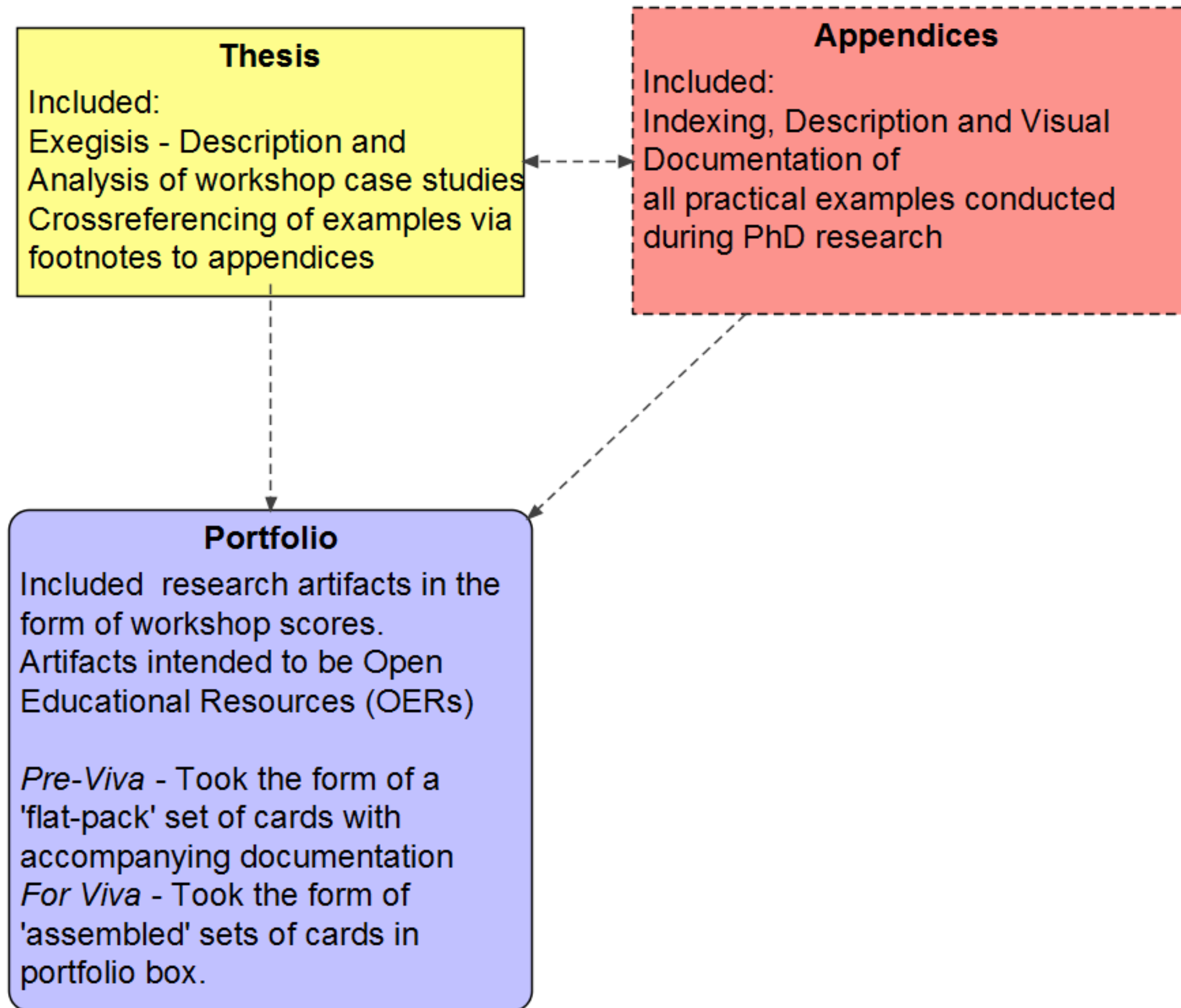
## Practice-Based vs Practice-Led

"• If a creative artifact is the basis of the contribution to knowledge, the research is practice-based.

• If the research leads primarily to new understandings about practice, it is practice-led."

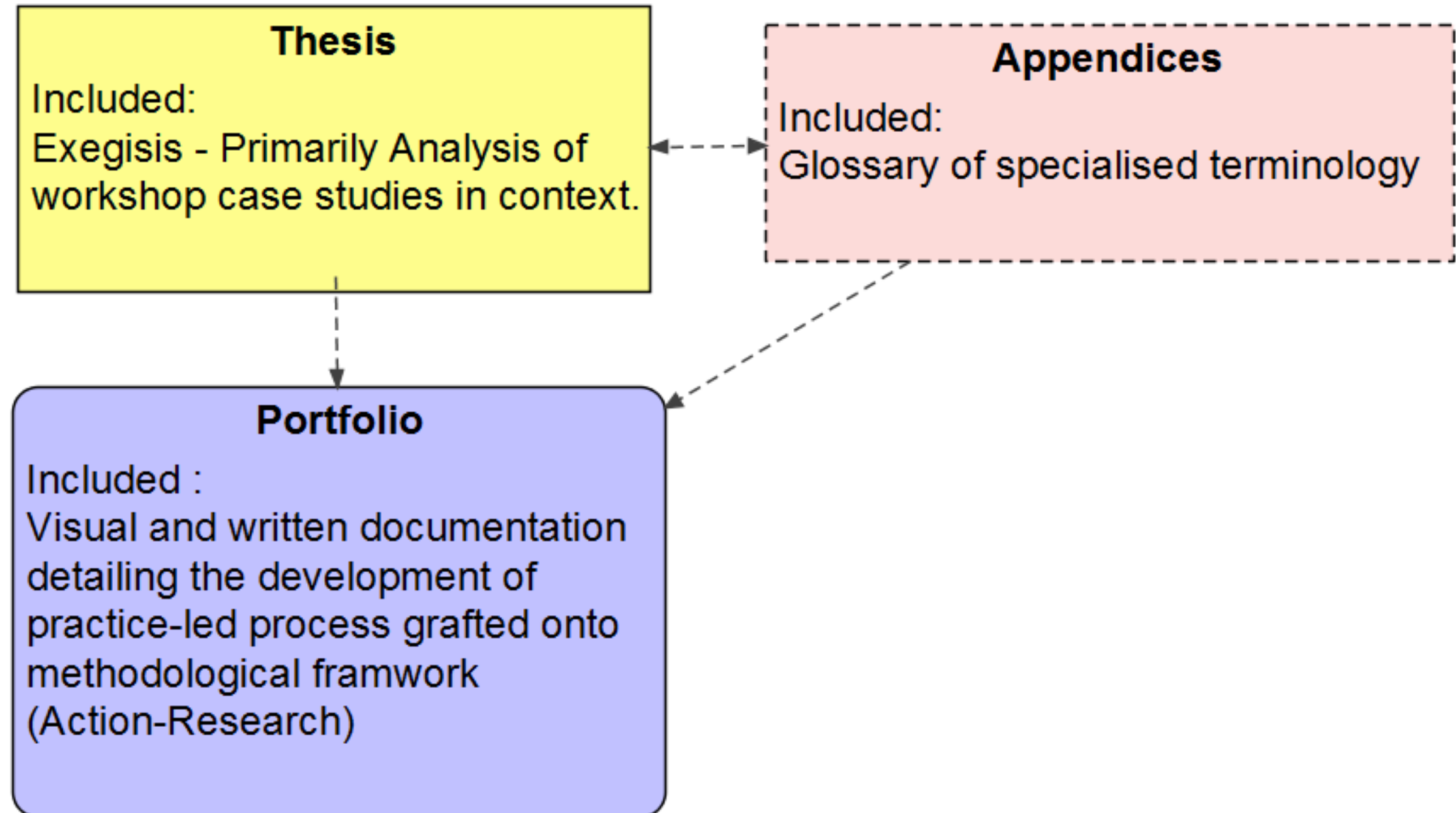
(Candy and Edmonds, 2018: 64)

## Shift from Practice-Based Submission...





**...To  
Practice-Led  
Submission**



## The *Practice* in Practice-Led

- The practice in my practice-led approach is located within my own artistic practice which involves the composing, conducting, and playing of workshops scores for artistic learning. In this sense, it is a form of performative research (Haseman, 2006), which draws from qualitative methodologies but is distinguished from them based on three characteristics.

## The *Practice* in Practice-Led

1. My research is in and through artistic practice (Borgdorff, 2011, p. 45) which is itself predisposed to being “discovery-led” (Rubidge, 2005, p. 8; Borgdorff, 2011, p. 56) and fuelled by an ‘enthusiasm for the practice’ which generates its own routes for emerging knowledge (Haseman, 2006, p. 100) i.e. based on intuition and experimentation-led.

## The *Practice* in Practice-led

2. The research outputs and claims for knowing conducted through my practice-led approach must be made through the symbolic language my practice has established (Haseman, 2006, p. 101). This symbolic language is distilled within the workshop scores contained in the portfolio component of this submission—but the creation of symbolic and specialist language is also to describe my practice and constitutes a large part of the post-rationalisation of my practice within the exegesis of this thesis.



## The *Practice* in Practice-led

3. The experiential knowledge created through this inquiry requires readers to play the workshop scores themselves, ideally with me, to gain a full understanding of the multidimensional (i.e. explicit and tacit) knowledge produced by the practice-led inquiry.

## Practice-Led Thesis

- My thesis document is an exegesis of a praxical engagement (i.e. tacit knowledge generated through handling of the materials of a practice-led inquiry) (Bolt, 2007, p. 31).
- The intention underpinning this exegesis is to communicate emergent knowledge gained through the practice-led research and to bring these insights into dialogue with existing practical and theoretical paradigms (Bolt, 2007, p. 33).

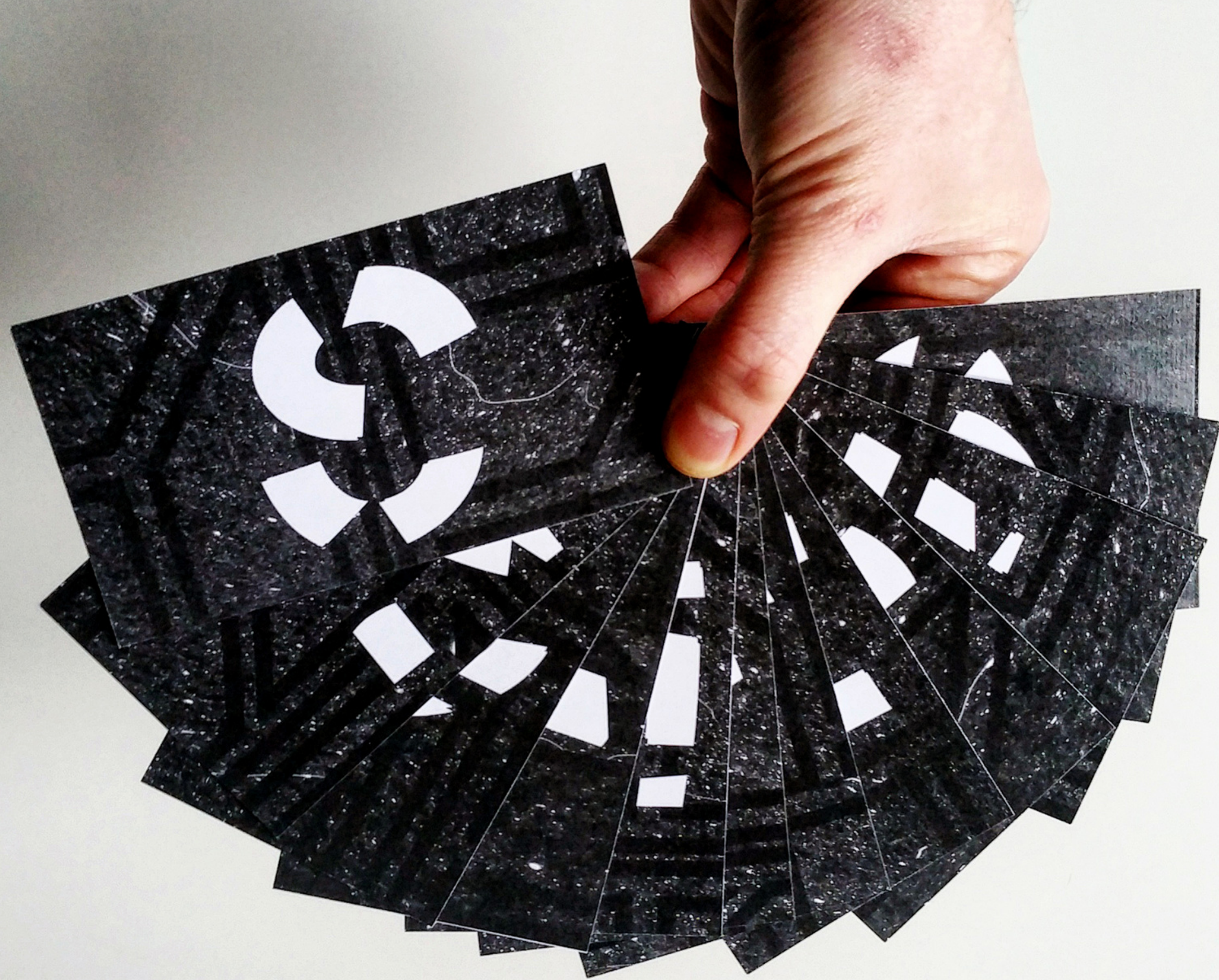
## Practice-Led Portfolio

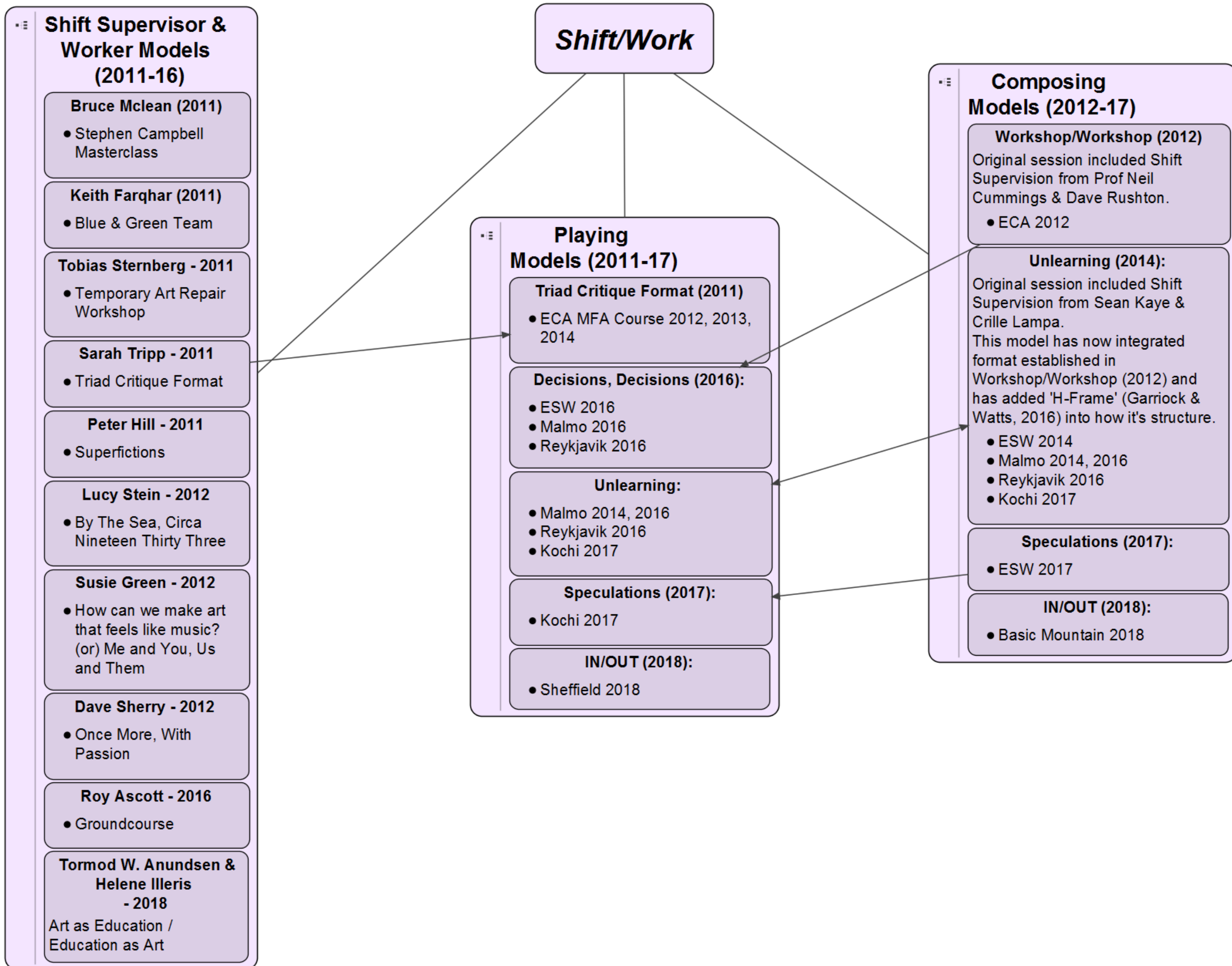
The portfolio component of my PhD submission attempts to map my research journey of composing, conducting and playing workshops as artistic learning environments, contextualising them and reflecting upon how I developed them and what knowledge this process yielded, onto the following action-research structure adapted from (Kemmis et al 2014, p. 18):

- Planning (composing) a workshop
- Acting (playing and conducting the workshop) and Observing what occurs
- Reflecting on the processes that unfolded and the consequences and then
- Re-planning
- Acting and Observing
- Reflecting, and so on until the cycle is brought up to date.

## Shift/Work

- Collaborative research undertaken through Critical Participatory Action Research (Kemmis, et al. 2014).
- Produces artifacts of knowledge in the form of visual and written scores.
- Invested in a paragogic practice-led approach to critically developing artistic understandings of epistemological rhetorics we create or engage with.





Future Routes of Inquiry Part of Ongoing PAR Cycle

Commencement of PAR Cycle

Playing PAR Cycle

**Composing Re-Planning Phase**  
Involves:

- Further honing of composing scores is undertaken by members of Shift/Work using knowledge gained over observation of multiple performances of scores.
- Critical reflection helps inform identification of, and planning for, new shared matters of concern to compose workshops in response to.
- Identification of different outcomes and articulations of knowledge being produced during cycles. i.e. talks, conference papers, visual scores.

**Composing Plan Phase**  
Involves:

- Members of Shift/Work collectively identifying shared matter of concern based on disciplinary knowledge or observations of practice e.g. Unlearning, Speculations, In/Out.
- Collaboratively compose workshop score that responds to the shared matter of concern in both form and content. Model must have paragogic component in which players co-compose further workshops for one another.
- Identify time and space for workshop to occur and publicly invite people to play the initial composing workshop score.

**Composing Act Phase**  
Involves:

- Playtesting Shift/Work composing score with compaign of peers at an agreed upon time and place.
- This process includes players dialogically negotiating the meaning of the shared matter of concern that provides the irritant (stimulus) for the workshop.
- Using their participation in this discussion to reify the abstract concepts discussing into a learning environment.

**Composing Observation Phase**  
Involves:

- Members of Shift/Work conducting seperate independent groups to allow Shift/Work to participate in the playing of the score while also actively gathering information regarding the effectiveness of the workshop composing score through observation for later collective reflection and analysis.

**Composing Reflection Phase**  
Involves:

- Members of Shift/Work meeting after the compaign of players initial PAR cycle enacted through the playing of the composing score to report on first-hand observations of the system in action.
- Critical discussion guides potential honing of composing score - i.e. identifying what worked productively, what was ineffective and needs changing, what was unexpected but potentially valuable for further iterations.
- Critical reflection on the workshop models co-composed by the compaign to discuss how to hone and stage again during the another Act Phase.

**Composing 2nd Reflection Phase**  
Involves:

- If members of Shift/Work were present during playing of scores critical reflection can occur through discussion between peers regarding similarities and differences between new experiences in relation to existing experiential knowledge.
- Adding depth to communal knowledge and understanding of the shared matters of concerns underpinning the workshops
- Further critical discussion of how to hone workshop scores for future use.
- Identifying and integrating metacognitive knowledge regarding the practice of composing workshops.

**Composing 2nd Observation Phase**  
Involves:

- Members of Shift/Work conducting either one or both a composing and playing workshop with new players while observing how groups play the scores.

**Composing 2nd Act Phase**  
Can involve:

- Playing workshops composed during initial PAR cycle are playtested in new time and place with new players .

**Composing 2nd Act Phase**  
Can involve:

- After (or without) playing workshop score from initial PAR cycle new players can also play an existing composing score to develop new playing workshops on a selected shared matter of concern.

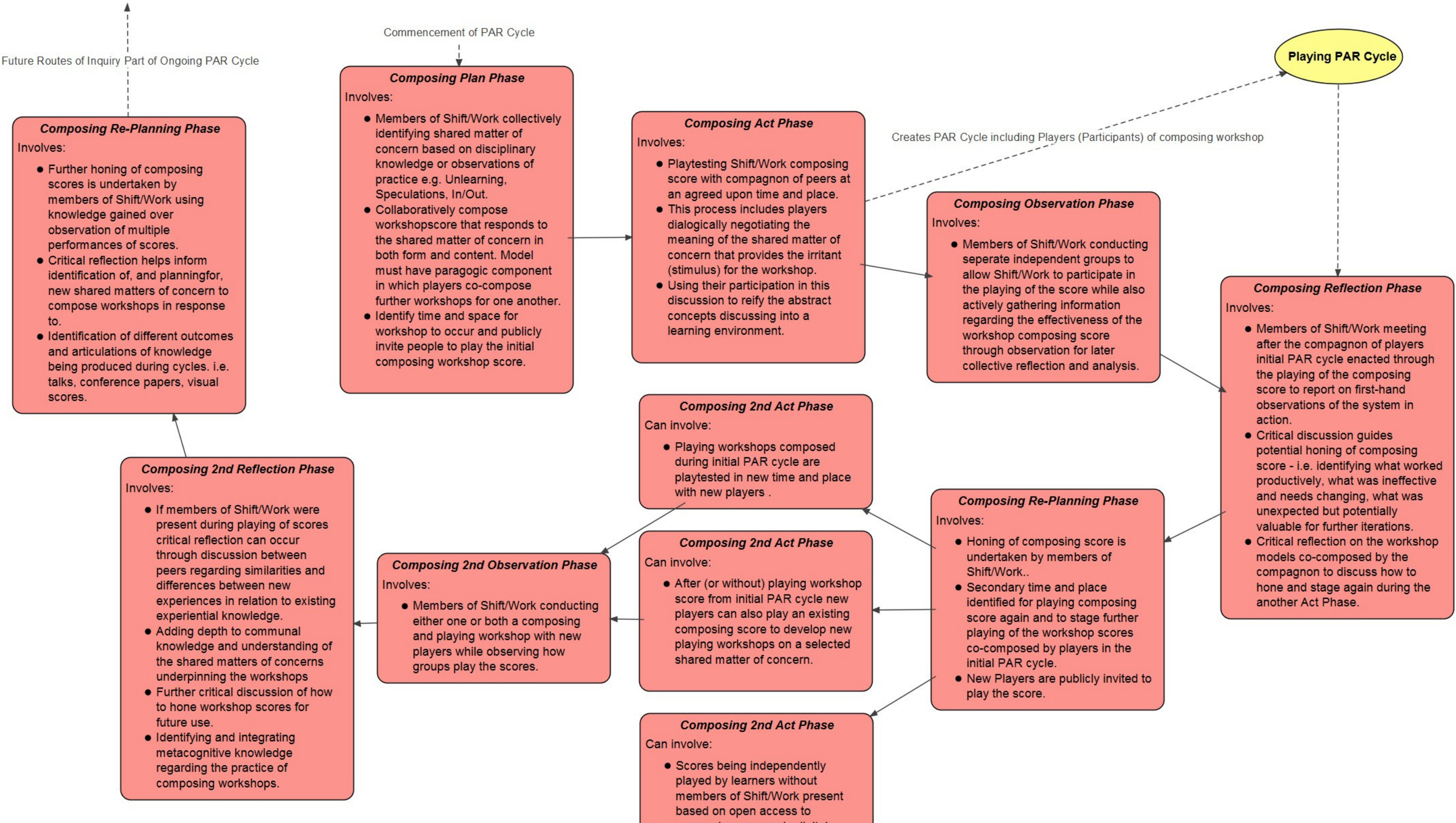
**Composing Re-Planning Phase**  
Involves:

- Honing of composing score is undertaken by members of Shift/Work..
- Secondary time and place identified for playing composing score again and to stage further playing of the workshop scores co-composed by players in the initial PAR cycle.
- New Players are publicly invited to play the score.

**Composing 2nd Act Phase**  
Can involve:

- Scores being independently played by learners without members of Shift/Work present based on open access to

Creates PAR Cycle including Players (Participants) of composing workshop



**Composing PAR Cycle**

**Playing Plan Phase**  
Involves:

- Players of the composing workshop score divide into groups and engage in structured negotiation of the meaning of the shared matter of concern the workshop is exploring.
- Players are guided by the instructions on the score and provided with materials to aid and shape how they reify their understanding of the matter.
- Further instructions from the score will require players to plan out a workshop for peers to play that embodies their own discussion and responds to shared matter of concern i.e. reifying their abstract conceptions into a concrete form.

**Playing Act Phase**  
Involves:

- Playtesting the workshop score they have composed.

**Playing Observation & Reflection Phase**  
Involves:

- Players stepping out of their playing of the score to identify potential issues, material necessities and edits to be made to the score.

**Playing Re-Planning Phase**  
Involves:

- Players collectively making alterations to the instructions on their score based upon critical reflection on their playtesting.
- Preparing their workshop score, including identifying a necessary or useable space and materials needed for others to play the score.

**Playing 2nd Act Phase**  
Involves:

- Groups exchanging and playing one another's workshop score.
- If there are more than two groups then groups can additionally rotate again to play multiple scores.

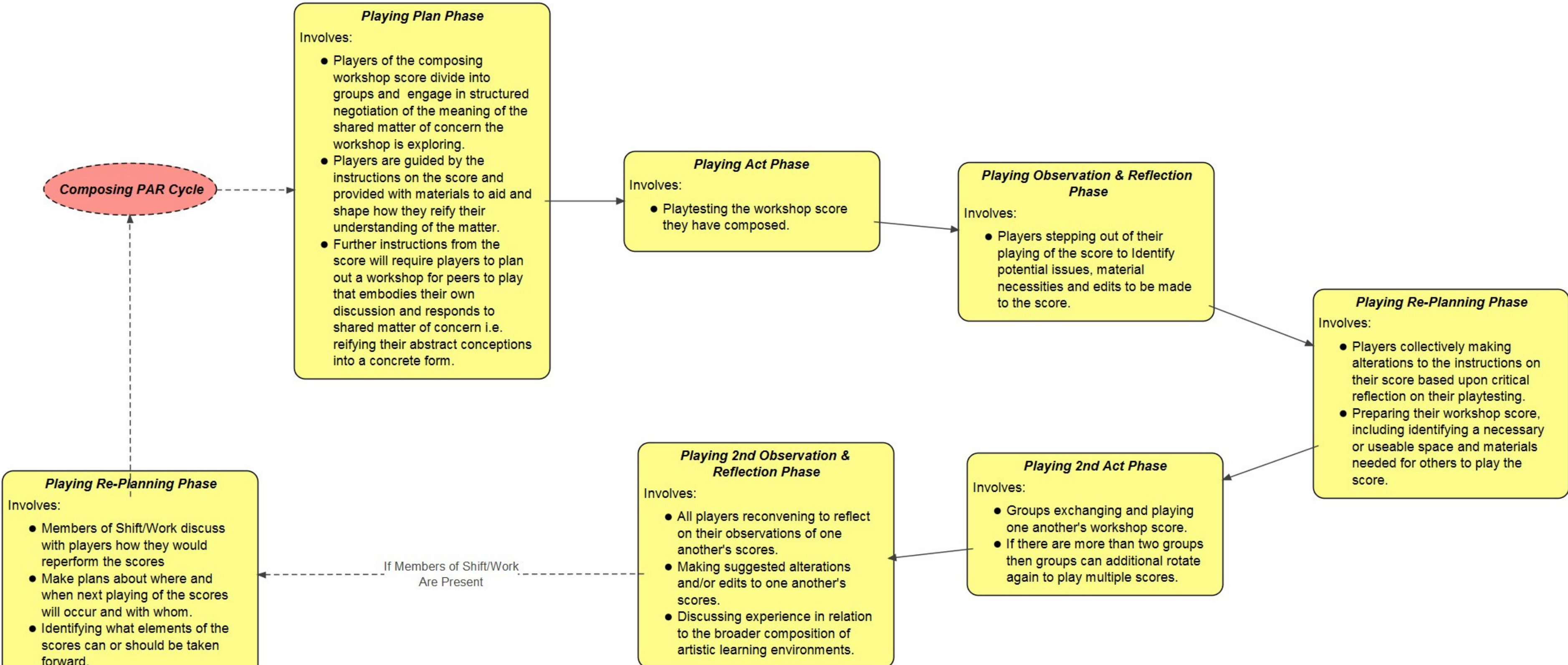
**Playing 2nd Observation & Reflection Phase**  
Involves:

- All players reconvening to reflect on their observations of one another's scores.
- Making suggested alterations and/or edits to one another's scores.
- Discussing experience in relation to the broader composition of artistic learning environments.



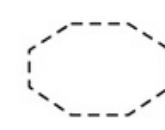

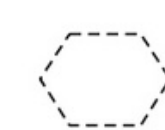
**Playing Re-Planning Phase**  
Involves:

- Members of Shift/Work discuss with players how they would reperform the scores
- Make plans about where and when next playing of the scores will occur and with whom.
- Identifying what elements of the scores can or should be taken forward.

If Members of Shift/Work Are Present



## Key for Shapes:

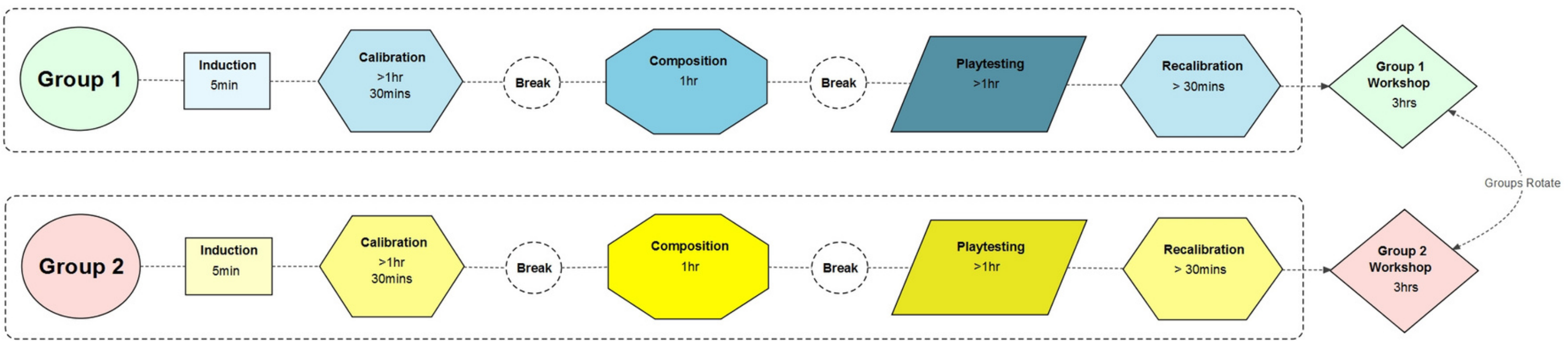
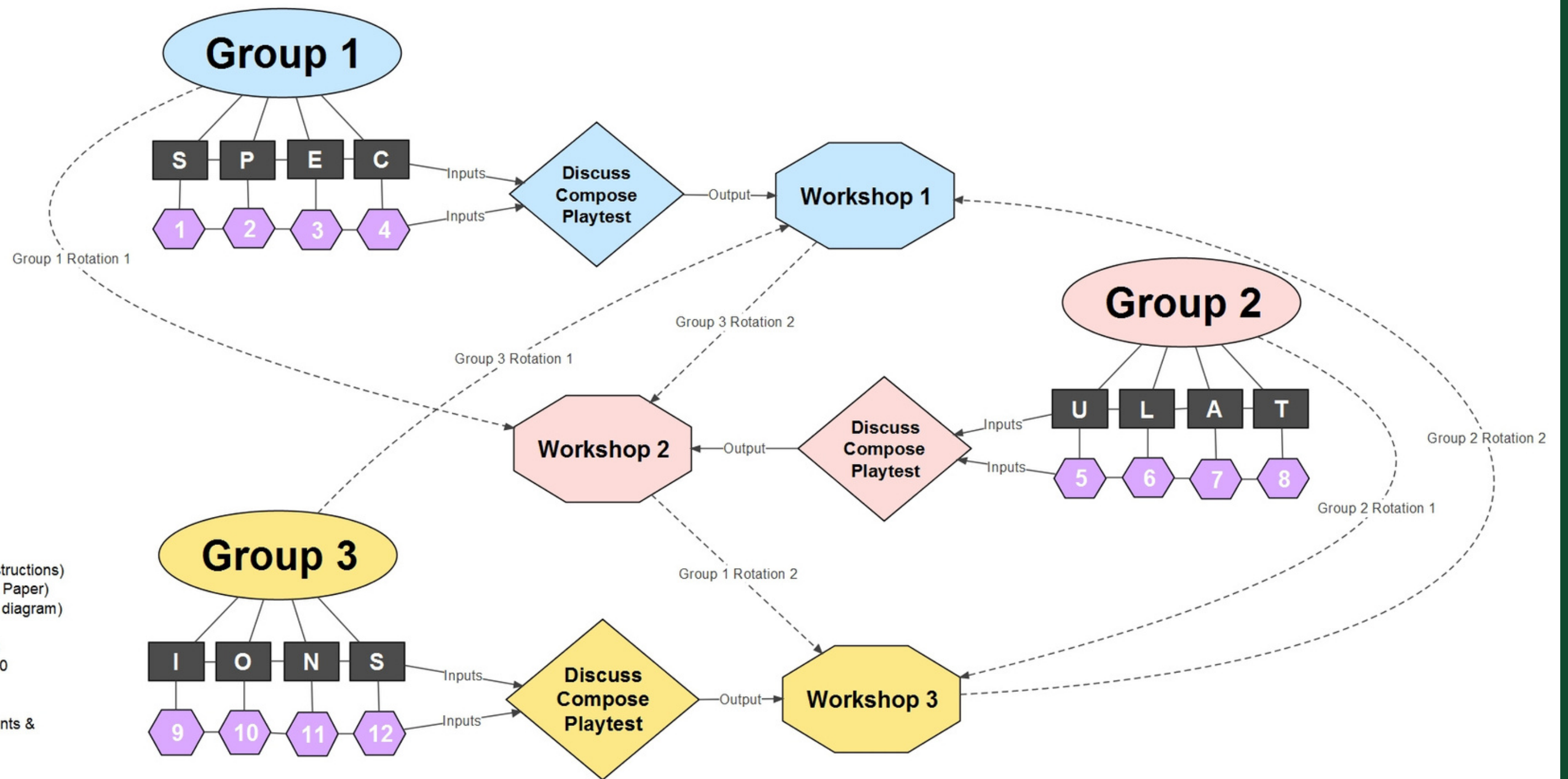
-  = Group consists of participants and a facilitator.
-  = Black box stage of composition where provided materials are experimented with, rearticulated as a workshop model, and playtested.
-  = Fully composed and playable workshop model that each group will take in turns to experience and feedback on.
-  = A card that includes a speculative term or practice to stimulate and focus discussion.
-  = Object selected in response to term on accompanying card. Can act as a probe for exploration of idea or for inclusion in the workshop model.

## Key for Cards:

- S = Abduction
- P = Hyperstition
- E = Gaming/Playing
- C = Fabulation
- U = Lateral Thinking
- L = Imaginary Solutions
- A = Forecasting/Divination
- T = Fictioning
- I = Probe
- O = Extended Cognition
- N = Licensing
- S = Weird-ing

## Key for Objects:

- 1 = Darts
- 2 = Time Capsule
- 3 = Horse Racing Game (no instructions)
- 4 = Spirit Money (Chinese Joss Paper)
- 5 = Lateral Thinking Puzzle (no diagram)
- 6 = Ladybird Picture Book
- 7 = Growling Bear Spirit Stones
- 8 = Strip from Eagle Comic 1990
- 9 = Dream Catcher
- 10 = Notebook
- 11 = Recipe Template (ingredients & directions only)
- 12 = Weirding die





# SPECULATIONS

1. Devise and take part in a workshop that facilitates Speculation
2. Groups of Shift/workers convene in these distinct spaces
3. Each group picks 4 playing cards
4. Each group picks 4 probes
5. Turn card #1, use it to practise speculation with 2c probes
6. Turn card #2, ... speculate...
7. ... Card #3, ... speculate...
8. ... #4, ... speculate...
9. Eliminate non-speculation
10. Jigsaw classroom: compose a speculative workshop
11. Playtest all elements of the workshop
12. Recalibrate and refine
13. Score the workshop
14. Play the Speculations Scores

# UNLEARNING

1. Devise and take part in a workshop that facilitates Unlearning
2. Groups of Shift/workers convene in distinct spaces
3. Silent meditation on 'unlearning'
4. Free-association with Post-it notes
5. Form clusters on wall with post-its
6. Harbours discussion of 'unlearning'
7. Eliminate non-unlearning, place in margins
8. Jigsaw Classroom: design an unlearning workshop
9. Identify unlearning practices: verbs, actions, Probes, Props
10. Make the Post-its to a time-line score that the other group(s) can perform
11. Playtest all elements of the workshop
12. Recalibrate and refine the workshop elements
13. Score the Workshop
14. Play the Unlearning Workshops Scores
15. When the workshops conclude the groups must disperse

# DECISIONS DECISIONS

1. Two groups of Shift/workers convene in distinct spaces
2. Each group has an identical set of time-stamped decision cards
3. Shift/workers turn the first card. It bears the word 'BUILD' - MATERIALS: 1/Drawers 2/Tape, hammers, etc.
4. To obtain a material, each group of Shift/workers must wait their turn.
5. Card #2 instructs the group to make lunch and have it ready in 2 hours. - MATERIALS: 1/ fruit, veg, etc. 2/ camp kitchen.
6. Card #3: Swap sides and eat the food prepared by the other group.
7. Card #4: Go orienteering to work off lunch. Your route will be designed by the other group. - MATERIALS: 1/ stopwatch 2/ orienteering maps, compass
8. Jigsaw Classroom: Design an orienteering route for the other group.
9. Playtest all elements of the orienteering route.
10. The groups reconvene, swap instructions. The orienteering routes are completed within 50 mins.
11. Both groups reconvene on one to check-in their waypoint markers and to discuss their decisions.
12. find