SENSS
South and East Network for Social Sciences

Middlesex University London

SENSS DTP2

South and East Network for Social Sciences

Capturing Critical Turning Points

Framing Interdisciplinary Discovery for Qualitative Research through Reflective Biographical and Visual Techniques

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8th September 2026

This SENSS workshop was sponsored and organised by Middlesex University

Biographies

Anastasia Christou



Anastasia Christou is Professor of Sociology and Social Justice at Middlesex University London, and Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. An interdisciplinary scholar and academic activist, she researches identity, inequality, intersectionality, and social justice across gender, class, race, sexuality, and ethnicity, with ethnographic fieldwork spanning Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. She volunteers with Cara and co-founded the Free University Brighton. Her work is published by Harvard and Amsterdam University Presses, and she edits GeoHumanities and the Journal of Further and Higher Education. She is the 2025 A. Noam Chomsky Global Connections Award Winner.

Lisa Overton

Dr Lisa Overton (she/her-they/them) is a queer feminist academic working on gendered-sexualities and crisis and disaster, particularly in relation to age and lifecourse. She is interested in everyday lives and experiences and expanding the definition of what we mean by disaster. Lisa has worked and researched on gendered issues across the globe - Sri Lanka, New Orleans, USA, the U.K. and 'International Development' more generally. This has included their collaborations with Oxfam, UNRISD and Plan International. Most recently, Lisa serves as Co-Convenor of the LGBTQAI+ Group for the Sendai Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). Her current work explores notions of gender, relationships, sexual consent, pleasure and danger through creative and scholarly writings.



Evgenia Iliadou



Evgenia is a Visiting Fellow in the School of Law and Social Sciences at Middlesex University London. Her work sits at the intersections of critical migration and border studies, critical criminology, sociology and social anthropology. She examines implicit and explicit forms of border violence, focusing on institutionalised neglect, abandonment, and border-related deaths, as well as epistemic injustice. She has published a monograph, Border Harms and Everyday Violence: A Prison Island in Europe, and in peer-reviewed publications across criminology and border studies. Prior to and alongside her academic work, she worked as an NGO practitioner in immigration detention centres in Greece and the UK, supporting unaccompanied minors and survivors of torture, sexual abuse, gender-based violence, and human trafficking.

Paula McIver Nottingham



Dr Paula McIver Nottingham is an experienced academic practitioner specialising in professional practice based programmes within Higher Education for learners in the workplace. She is currently the PGR Lead for the HSCE/S&T Faculty Professional Doctorate and supervises M/Dprof and PhD candidates. Paula trained as a fine artist and uses creative methodology to pursue pedagogic research interests within higher education, lifelong learning and continued professional development. She is now undertaking a Level 7 Coaching qualification and recently received a HERDSA reviewer of the year award.



Flaviana Manta

Flaviana is a candidate in Stage 2 of her Doctor of Professional Studies Candidate at Middlesex University who works for the Romanian Culture and Charity Together- Romanian Hub in London and is focusing on “A Study of the Learning Experiences of First and Second-generation Romanian Young People and Their Sociocultural Integration as a Community within the London Area”.

Stefanie Sachsenmaier



Stefanie Sachsenmaier (PhD Middlesex University, DEA Université de la Sorbonne Nlle, MA Goldsmiths College, SFHEA) currently lectures and supervises doctoral students at Middlesex University in contemporary performance. Her research centres on the processual in creative practice, with a particular interest in the ways that performance practices extend into the socio-political context. Publications include the co-edited book Collaboration in Performance Practice: Premises, Workings and Failures (Palgrave 2016) and a series of writings related to her long-term research with British choreographer Rosemary Butcher. She co-edited the special issues Critical Stages ‘Unstable Ground: Reconfigurations of Performance and Politics’ (2021) and Performance Research: ‘On Solidarity’ (2022) and is currently working on a monograph Politics of Process in Performance, forthcoming with Bloomsbury. She has a background as a performer and is an experienced practitioner of Wu Style tai chi chuan.



Suzanne Lawrence Visual Recorder

Trained at Cognitive Media (RSA Animates, TED Ed), Suzanne Lawrence specialises in visual communication to enrich the learning experience. As a facilitator of graphic recording, her focus is the live capture of the day’s events and aiding the flow of dialogue wherever possible - through displaying her work as a talking point and always being ready to engage with attendees. She also uses digital animation and graphic illustration as storytelling tools, promoting visual learning for the greatest number of people.

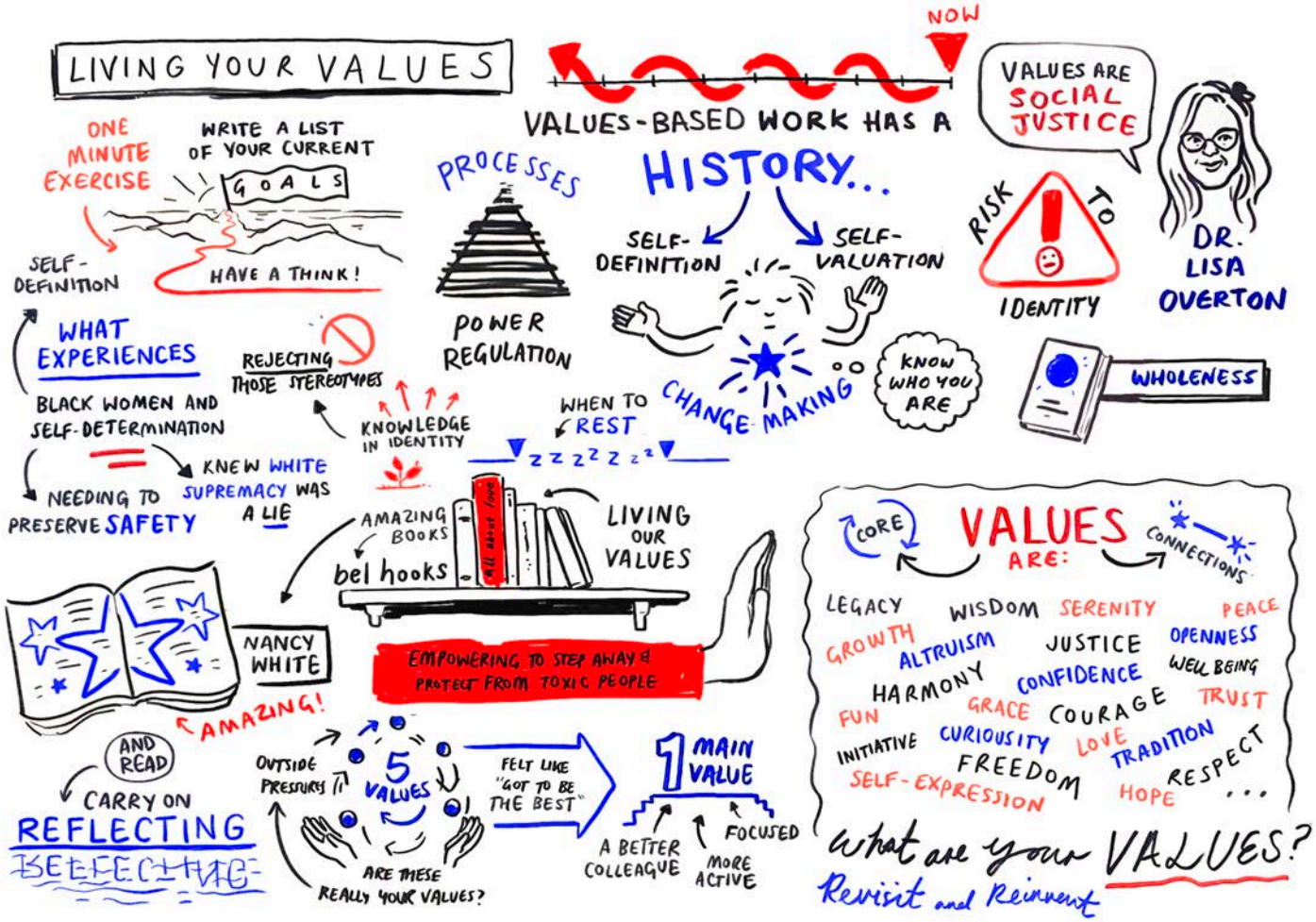
Workshop 1

Theorising from the Inside Out: Intersectionality, Intergenerational Knowledge, and Decolonial Reflexivity in Doctoral Research



Research interpretation is never a view from nowhere. This session invites doctoral researchers to examine how intergenerational and intragenerational dynamics, intersectional frameworks, and decolonial epistemologies actively shape the process of theorisation not as contextual add-ons, but as constitutive forces in how knowledge is produced, legitimated, and contested. We begin from the premise that who we are: our generational location, our gendered, cultural, and social identities, and our position within structures of power and knowledge; this is not noise to be controlled for but signal to be analytically engaged. Drawing on intersectional theory, feminist

standpoint epistemology, and decolonial critiques of Eurocentric knowledge production, the session explores how researchers can move beyond surface acknowledgement of positionality toward a more rigorous, methodologically integrated practice of reflexive analysis. Particular attention is given to intergenerational knowledge transmission, how disciplinary inheritances, mentoring relationships, and generational shifts in scholarly paradigms shape what counts as a finding and how it gets theorised. Participants will work through their own research material in guided reflection, developing concrete strategies for making difference, power, and situated knowledge central to, rather than decorative of, their analytical frameworks. The session aims to equip doctoral researchers not only with conceptual vocabulary but with the critical confidence to theorise from their own scholarly and social location with rigour, accountability, and intellectual ambition.



Workshop 2

Living your Values in Research and Careers

"It is learning to 'shift' and 'pivot' while remaining grounded in a latticework of identities and research methodologies that i am proposing as the design for a transversal, trans/feminist methodology for Women's Studies" - (Pryse 2000:110)

During this section, the presentation will focus on positionalities as a concept and how positionalities play out practically in our lived realities. I explore values versus goals and emphasise that do to research meaningfully and to have a career that fulfills us, thinking from a values-led position where values are core to your being can help us overcome blocks (e.g. dissatisfaction) and live a meaningful life. Understanding our values can help us to know why we cannot achieve goals (aspirational rather than core) and/or why our career paths are not bringing fulfilment. Finding your values takes time and the sessions today present some starting points

for you to think about and work on independently. Knowing your values links to your positionality – how you are "in" as well as you engage with the world around you. The One-to-one "values pods" will use values cards to begin thinking through what your core values are and how they might apply to your research and career and signpost you to resources to continue exploring on your terms.



Workshop 3

Conceptualising visual meaning making for qualitative research analysis

For many, the experience of drawing out ideas and haptic discovery sometimes ends in childhood, we are encouraged to communicate in words, but why can't we also use imagery, sound, haptic sensations to understand how the social world works? The ability to use creative processes to develop a greater understanding of self and context is an essential tool for qualitative researchers who use techniques like the BigQ reflexive thematic analysis championed by Braun and Clarke (2022). In this session, participants will be asked to develop their own symbolic mapping designs using visual thinking to create tangible and reflexive resources for future research project work.

By the end of this part of the session participants will have generated some useful 'translation' concept drawings (Arnheim, 1969) about your area of study using words as starting points (freewriting) and visual mapping as matrix, pattern and voice (West, 2011) We will be using visual art to interpret the emergence of ideas, to bring out connections and use the critique as a feedback loop (Sutton, 2013). Our interaction with a participatory audience is an act of translation that can be applied to the BigQ framing of qualitative analysis.



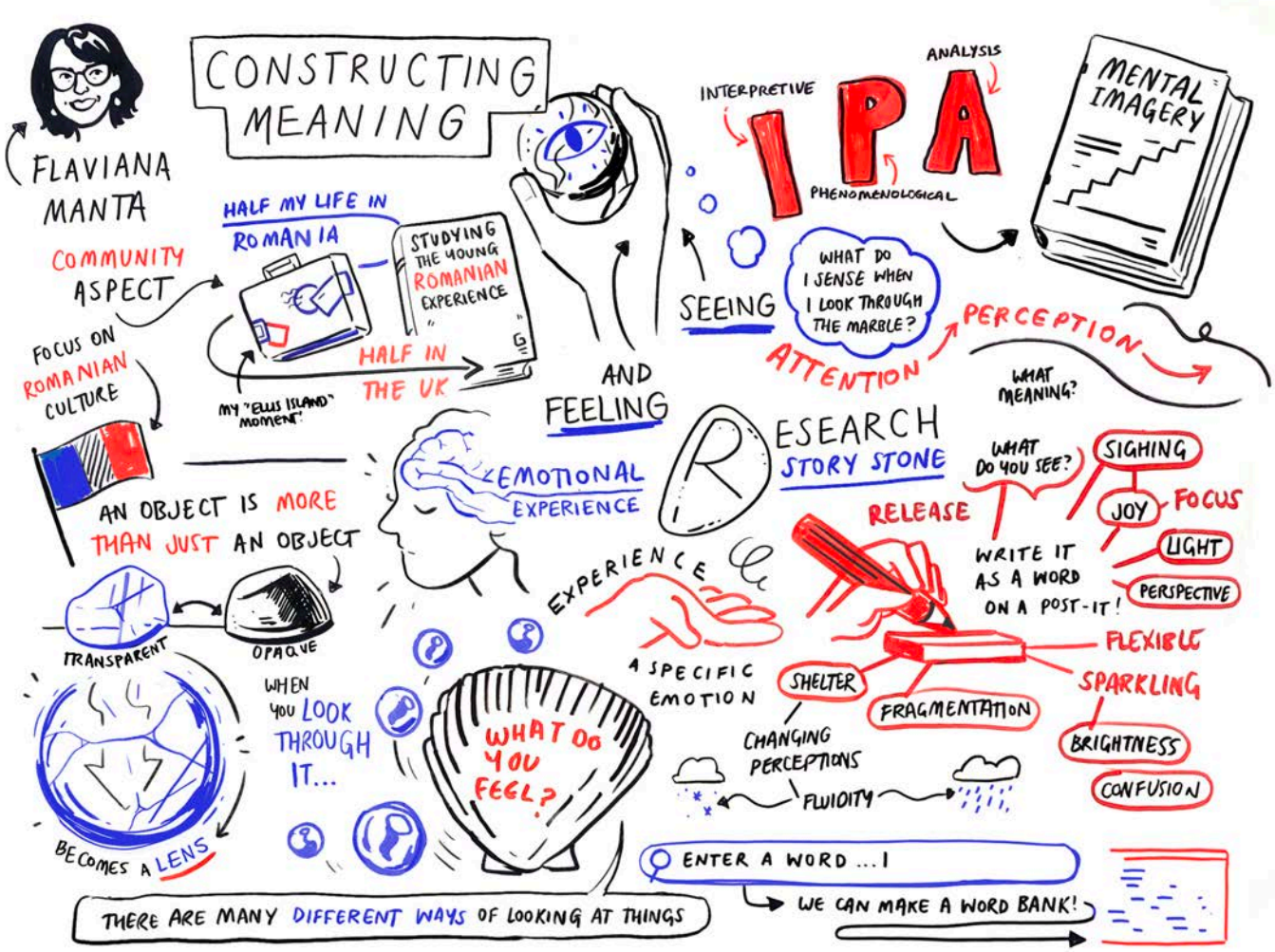
Workshop 4

Drawing Borders, Mapping Journeys: Reading Refugee Maps as Testimony

Maps are often associated with states, borders, and official knowledge. Yet people on the move also create maps (hand-drawn, remembered, and lived) that challenge dominant representations of migration and border spaces.

This interactive workshop explores a refugee-produced map as a form of testimony, memory, and resistance. Rather than approaching the map as a simple illustration of a migration route, participants will consider how it constructs alternative understandings of borders, mobility, violence, and belonging.

Working collaboratively with a single hand-drawn map, participants will examine what becomes visible, what remains absent, and how personal cartographies challenge official geopolitical narratives. The workshop invites discussion on questions such as: What counts as a border? How is violence represented visually? What forms of knowledge emerge through lived experience rather than institutional mapping? And how might researchers engage ethically with visual testimonies produced by displaced people?



Workshop 5

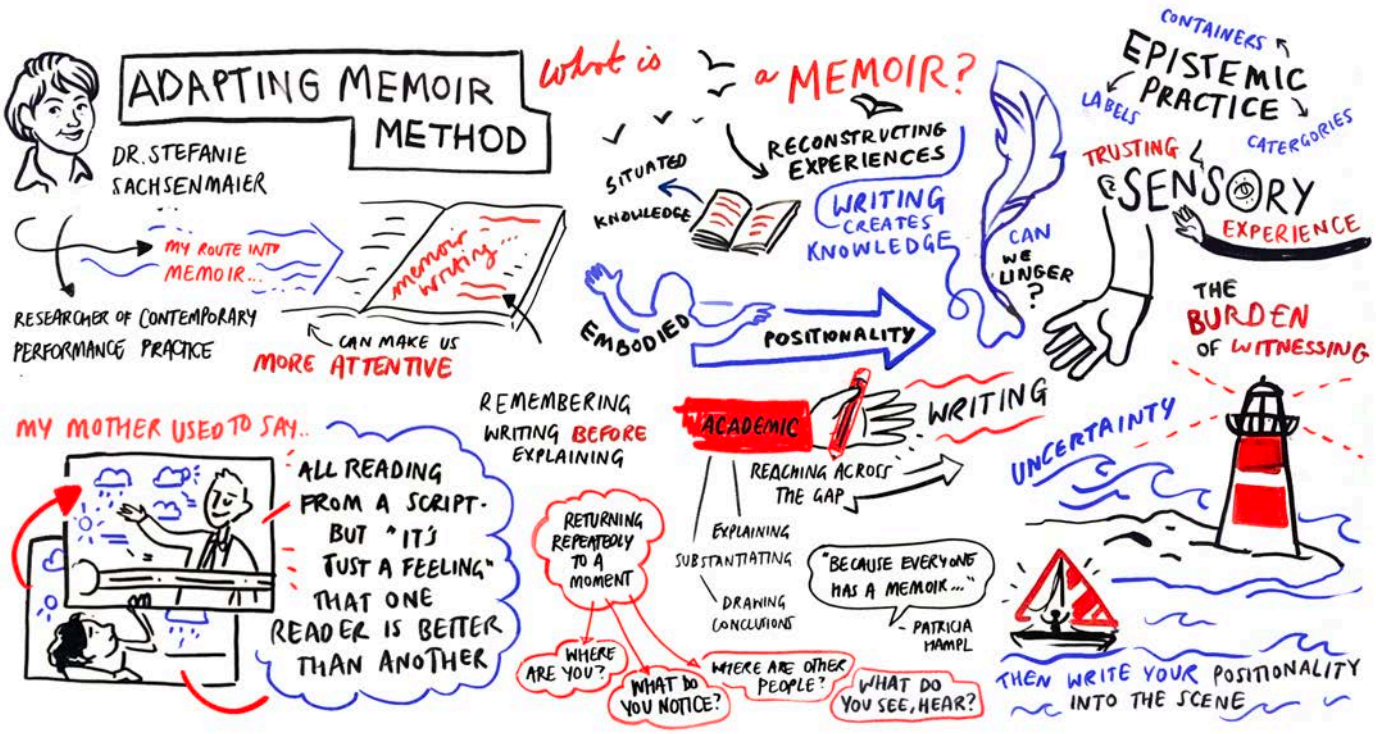
Constructing meaning in terms of attention,perception, and interpretation, with reflection on interpretation, context, and framing

The structure of the workshop will include an introductory part where we draw attention to the phenomenological aspect, the visible meaning to each one of us, when we look through a coloured pebble in the light, and the hidden meaning that is there just for our interpretation. Participants will engage in a structured activity using the clear pebbles to look through and the rough pebbles to draw onto, to construct or reconstruct visual meaning. This was inspired by the IPA when examining something that is latent or disguised, but emerges into light.

This analogy, moving from idea to practical, from theory to visual representation, isn't about examining what the pebble truly is, but rather how it appears to us. We can connect this idea to any motivator you like—whether it's a feeling, a role, an influence in our lives, or a fleeting moment or dream. We invite participants to explore this feeling by creating an image on a pebble and writing a word that captures it on another pebble.

Then we move on to discussing the participants' individual creations at our table and conclude which dimension we give.

After, as part of a group we could ask each table to create a story that would relate to a specific goal, or something that would improve motivation and write in 3 sentences, on the record card/ sticky note what their interpretation on the meaning given through the cycle of arrangement, interpretation and reconfiguration, therefore the workshop will demonstrate how meaning is not intrinsic to objects but emerges through attentional framing and contextual shifts.



Workshop 6

Adapting Memoir Methods for Researchers: Writing Embodied Experience

Memoir writing offers a rich repertoire of techniques for exploring memory, lived experience and critical moments of change. While developed within creative nonfiction, these methods can also support reflexive qualitative research by helping researchers attend to their own embodied experiences, assumptions and relationships to the research process. This interactive workshop introduces selected memoir writing techniques as practical tools for reflexive inquiry. Through a short writing exercise, participants will explore how writing from remembered experience can deepen interpretation, surface tacit knowledge and generate new insights. The session invites participants to consider writing not simply as a way of communicating research but as a method of enquiry that contributes to knowledge production.



Thank you for your interest in the **SENSS** sponsored event at **Middlesex University**

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