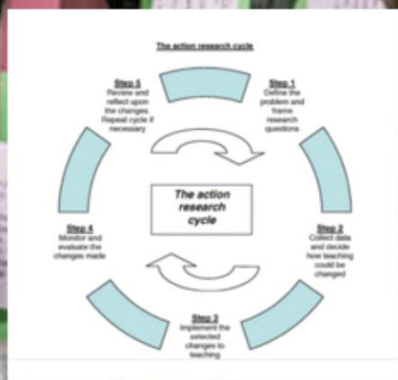An embedded toolkit for teaching Critical Sustainability Research Techniques

Overview

- Central Saint Martins
- Academic support librarians- Information Literacy Training
- Radical Information Literacy – activism through collaborative information seeking and discussion around sources
- Trouble compiling feedback data
- Creating a Sustainability Toolkit for teacher librarians
- Students must have access to knowledge about sustainable choices!

"Information literacy supports the concept of lifelong learning. Tomorrow, new skills will be required because information will come in new formats and from different sources. The skills of know how to use technology will change with time, but what will always be necessary is the ability to find, evaluate, and use information. These are ultimately the skills that our art students will need in order to succeed academically and professionally"

Zanin-Yost and Tapley, 2008, p.44

Library, Granary Square. UAL Images.

The Problem...

Student Perspective

- How can I find out about a material?

- How do I know whether what I am using is sustainable?

- I'm googling sustainable sources of *bioplastics* but nothing comes up

- I don't know where to look!

- **Librarian's Perspective**
- No time to create new content?
- Where is training in sustainable practice coming from?
- Not embedded in course units or projects
- Classes are not assessed
- UAL sustainability pledge
- Sustainability and climate crisis an increasing problem.

Produces the Question...

"With the urgency of the Climate Crisis upon us, how can librarians at UAL be supported in providing students a framework in for researching sustainability?"

Exploring solutions
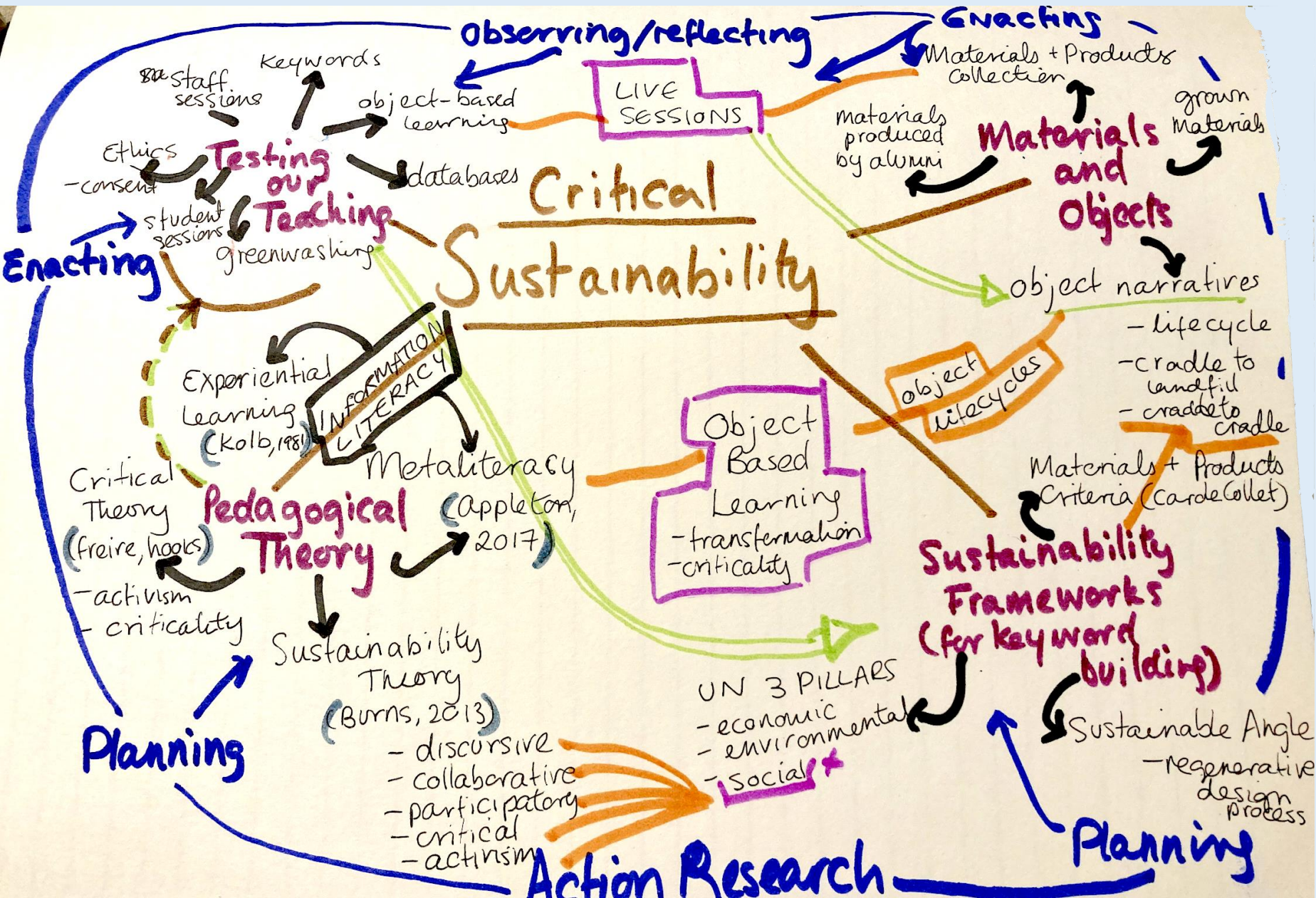
- Aligning theory with teaching
- Studio focus (haptics, sensory)
- Student as the expert (discursive, collaborative)
- Tangible Frameworks
- Experience through practice
- Staff sessions for observation, reflection and collaborative advice

The action timeline

Timeline: an embedded tool for teaching Critical Sustainability Research

	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
Professional standards and qualifications	P G C E R T S E L F I N I T I A T E D P R O J E C T (SiP)						F H E A application compiled (focuses on this project)		
Toolkit stage	Project problem and question defined		Student workshops initiated and data collected		Further workshops; Data compiled; Reflection and analysis		Toolkit compiled and staff workshops and interviews commenced		Reflection and presentation of findings
Action research stage	P L A N N I N G		I M P L E M E N T I N G + O B S E R V I N G		R E F L E C T I N G + O B S E R V I N G		P L A N N I N G	I M P L E M E N T I N G + O B S E R V I N G	R E F L E C T I N G + O B S E R V I N G
Other notes	Pedagogical theory and methodological enquiry; literature reviews	Workshop content made	BA Fine Art UAL-wide session	Entangled futures presentation	Microteach 1 LILAC pedagogical abstract	Microteach 2	Staff workshop 1 (proposed and tbc; UAL Foundation staff)	Staff workshop 2 (proposed and tbc; UAL Librarians)	LILAC information literacy and sustainability workshop (30+ librarian participants); ethical consent sought.

Feedback

- All sessions were unembedded and UAL-wide
- Hard to gauge students expectations
- Sessions were experimental!
- Asking retrospectively for participation was problematic

Example 2: 'Researching Sustainability with the Library' workshop, UAL-wide November 2021 (in conjunction with Billie Coxhead) - ethical consent sought

Duration: 90 minutes; online Link to slides:	Participants: 70 - very rapidly plummeted to 30 (after breakout rooms)	Learning outcome
Highlighted activity (1st of 5 activities)	Students are introduced to the UN 3 pillars sustainability framework, and asked to enter breakout rooms to investigate the social sustainability of an object provided to them (online)	Fostering sense of community, identity and belonging (hooks). Using dialogue to forge engagement (Freire) Knowledge building through experience (Kolb) Learning through reflection (Burns)
Comments	Only 2 of the 30 participants that stayed for the duration of the session agreed to leave feedback. I believe this is because the session overran substantially, and people did not enjoy our spirited attempts to encourage participation in breakout rooms. As this was not an embedded session, and only required participants to sign up via Academic support online, there was no onus to stay and discuss each topic. In addition, the session was quite technical, as people were expected to discuss objects through one of the UN's pillars of sustainability – in a 90 minute session this may have provided an information overload. I was also able to deduce that the two participants leaving feedback had been active throughout the session.	
Selected student comments	Feedback question via survey: At what point did you feel involved? Answer: " At the end during the reflections. The breakout room was very quiet...only seemed to be me taking part!" Feedback question via survey: What will you remember from this session? Answer: "The three pillars approach however I would like to have seen a greater engagement with social aspects, such as gender and race"	

Further data

Only 13 responses, 7 of which gave informed consent

All respondents found sessions 'very useful' or 'useful'

Not much written feedback

Low attendance

But...amazing response in-session via Padlet, whiteboard and chat

Future qualitative opportunities in sessions for staff

I will continue to capture student data via informed consent. I have two sessions planned in January that will imitated the interview schedule for the session completed in January 2022. I will also use the latest iteration of the consent form approved by Tim.

Sessions will also be arranged with Academic and Library staff, and will therefore require additional interviews that are dependent on the activities covered. I plan to approach the following groups for targeted research between January and April:

The Library and Student Services Sustainability Community of Practice (LSS SusCop) - date tbc

MA Art & Science staff - I have approached the course leader, who has offered to help reflect on the toolkit - date: February or March

Climate Emergency Working Group - I am a member of this group and will propose to do a workshop in March

UAL Librarians - an advertised all-staff session with the aim of asking librarians to pose as students in a workshop - date: February

LILAC Conference: we have been accepted to do a 1 hour workshop (in collaboration with Billie Coxhead and Beth Thompson), but need an effective way of asking for consent and feedback. Date: April 2022

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