Integrating intersectionality: Reimagining user journeys

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Action Learning

1. Introducing intersectionality

2. Personas

3. Storytelling and journeys

4. Action design

5. Discussion

"When advocating for constructive disruption, we conceptualise that disruption is simply defined as a break or interruption in a normal course or process. We live in a society where racism is normalised, and any act of calling out race inequalities in different spaces is a form of disruption. To enact disruption requires an understanding of the system in which you are trying to disrupt and what part you are looking to interrupt normalised racist praxis. [we need to] identify core parts of the higher education system [in order to create] opportunities for transformation and change"

(Verma 2022, Anti-Racism in Higher Education: An Action Guide for Change)

About me

- Led on integrating intersectionality in programmes, policy and action design in government, third sector and higher education

- Doctoral research exploring intersecting identities in gendered environments

- Recent publications: <u>Anti-Racism in Higher Education – An Action Guide for Change</u>, <u>Intersectionality, positioning and narrative</u>, <u>Longitudinal Audio Diaries</u>, <u>Conducting the Emergency Response Evaluation in the COVID-19 era</u>.

Key concepts
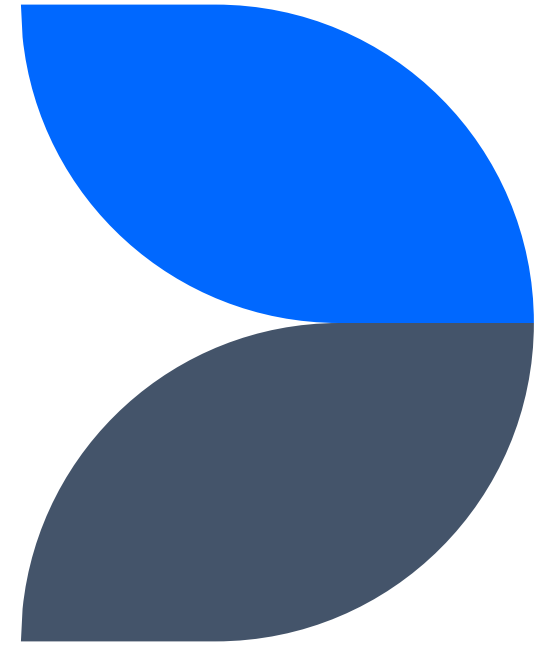
"the ways in which identities, inequalities and structures intersect and overlap to shape and impact the experience of marginalised communities who experience multiple disadvantages"

Structural

- Positioning of marginalised, oppressed and racialised people at the intersection of their identities (i.e. race, gender, class, ableism) in relation to their experiences of a system which enables their liberation
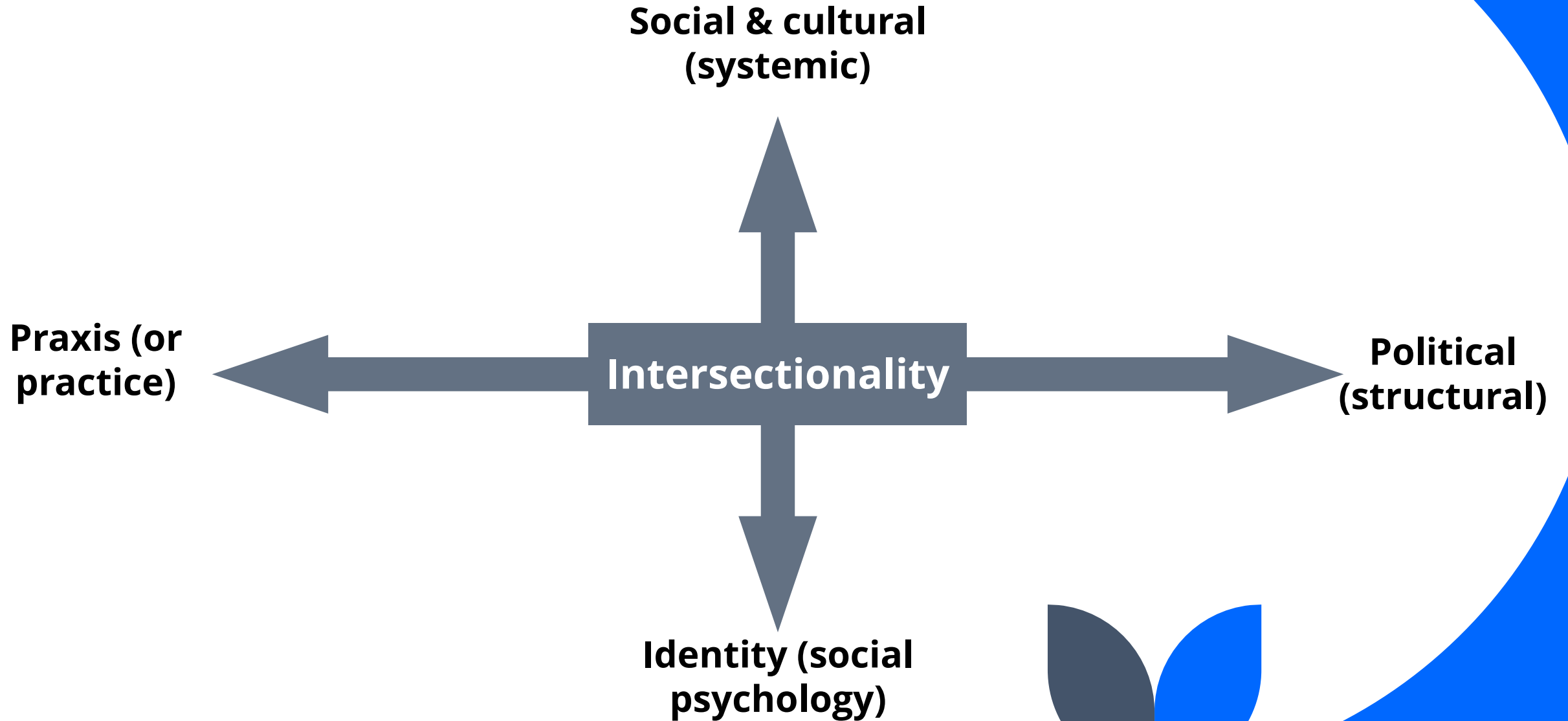
Political

- Wider policies and political debates that can significantly influence the oppression of marginalised and racialised groups
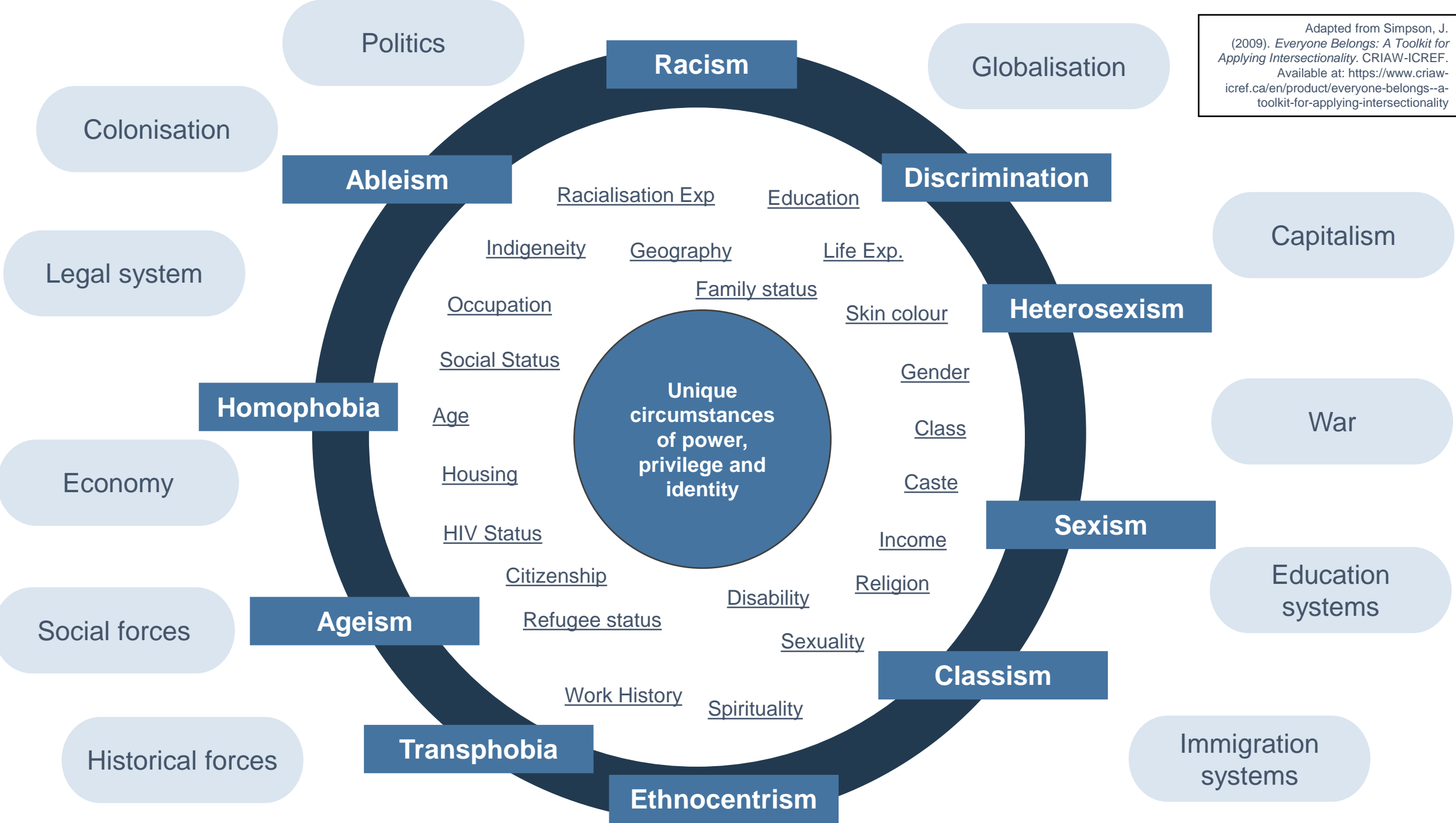
Representational

- Exploration and influence of social and cultural depictions and imagery of marginalised and racialised groups
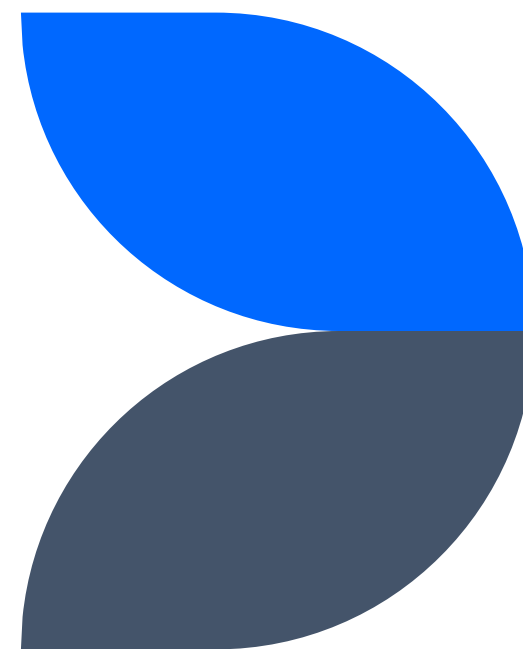
Intersectionality and positioning

Social & cultural
(systemic)

Praxis (or
practice)

Intersectionality

Political
(structural)

Identity (social
psychology)

Adapted from Simpson, J. (2009). *Everyone Belongs: A Toolkit for Applying Intersectionality*. CRIAW-ICREF. Available at: https://www.criaw-icref.ca/en/product/everyone-belongs--a-toolkit-for-applying-intersectionality

Racism

Discrimination

Heterosexism

Sexism

Classism

Ethnocentrism

Transphobia

Ageism

Homophobia

Ableism

Politics

Globalisation

Colonisation

Capitalism

Legal system

War

Economy

Education systems

Social forces

Immigration systems

Historical forces

Unique circumstances of power, privilege and identity

Racialisation Exp

Education

Indigeneity

Geography

Life Exp.

Family status

Occupation

Skin colour

Social Status

Gender

Age

Class

Housing

Caste

HIV Status

Income

Citizenship

Religion

Refugee status

Disability

Sexuality

Work History

Spirituality

Personas

User personas ([Faller, 2019](#))

- "User personas are archetypical users whose goals and characteristics represent the needs of a larger group of users.

- Usually, a persona is presented in a one or two-page document.

- Descriptions include behavior patterns, goals, skills, attitudes, and background information, as well as the environment in which a persona operates."

Scenario

The next slide presents a scenario which we will work through to rapidly develop a personal and a user journey.

Student X is a Black female who recounts a story during their politics seminar, she is also a course representative. This scenario has been adapted and in parts created for the purposes of this workshop.

In a morning Politics seminar, a lecturer asked what we knew about Hitler's economic policies. He specifically called on me, and I replied that I did not know. He then mocked me in front of the rest of the class and insinuated that I could not possibly be interested in studying politics if I did not know this detail about Hitler's Germany. As an international student from Nigeria, I explained that being educated in the global South meant that I did not have extensive knowledge of Germany during the interwar period. But she can talk about the impact of the economic policies of Ibrahim Babagida – a Nigerian military dictator. I felt frustrated, and disappointed by the assumption her knowledge was not seen at the same standard by the lecturer. From a learning point, students do not retain knowledge in a vacuum, studying is more effective when it can be applied to the world around them. This allows diversity into curriculum design and has various positive impacts such as the development of critical thinking skills.

After meeting friends for lunch in the cafeteria, I went looking for texts in the library that were not from the West and Europe, it was difficult to find where key texts from the Global South/Majority could be identified, to help me learn and explore and critically reflect on the ways in which economic policies compare and contrast in different contexts. Identifying texts and publications from Europe and the USA were easily highlighted, but trying to find and explore references that tie in with my culture, ethnicity and background could have enabled me to feel there were accessible diverse knowledges to be sought out. I fed this back to academic services and library staff but I'm not sure what happened to that feedback.

It's important to me to gain critical thinking and being able to use Global Majority case studies and examples. In teaching and explaining a concept in higher education, I don't want to have to readily accept assumptions, however, accessing different cases from different international contexts is difficult in the current library space.

Activity: Persona development

- Use one colour (where possible)
- Identify the personal and professional identities of the user
- Identify what they are seeing, hearing, thinking and feeling.
- 7 minutes

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Activity: Persona development

- Use a second colour (where possible)

- To draw lines between the identities and to pertinent descriptors

- 5 minutes

Seeing

Hearing

Personal and professional Identities

Feeling

Thinking
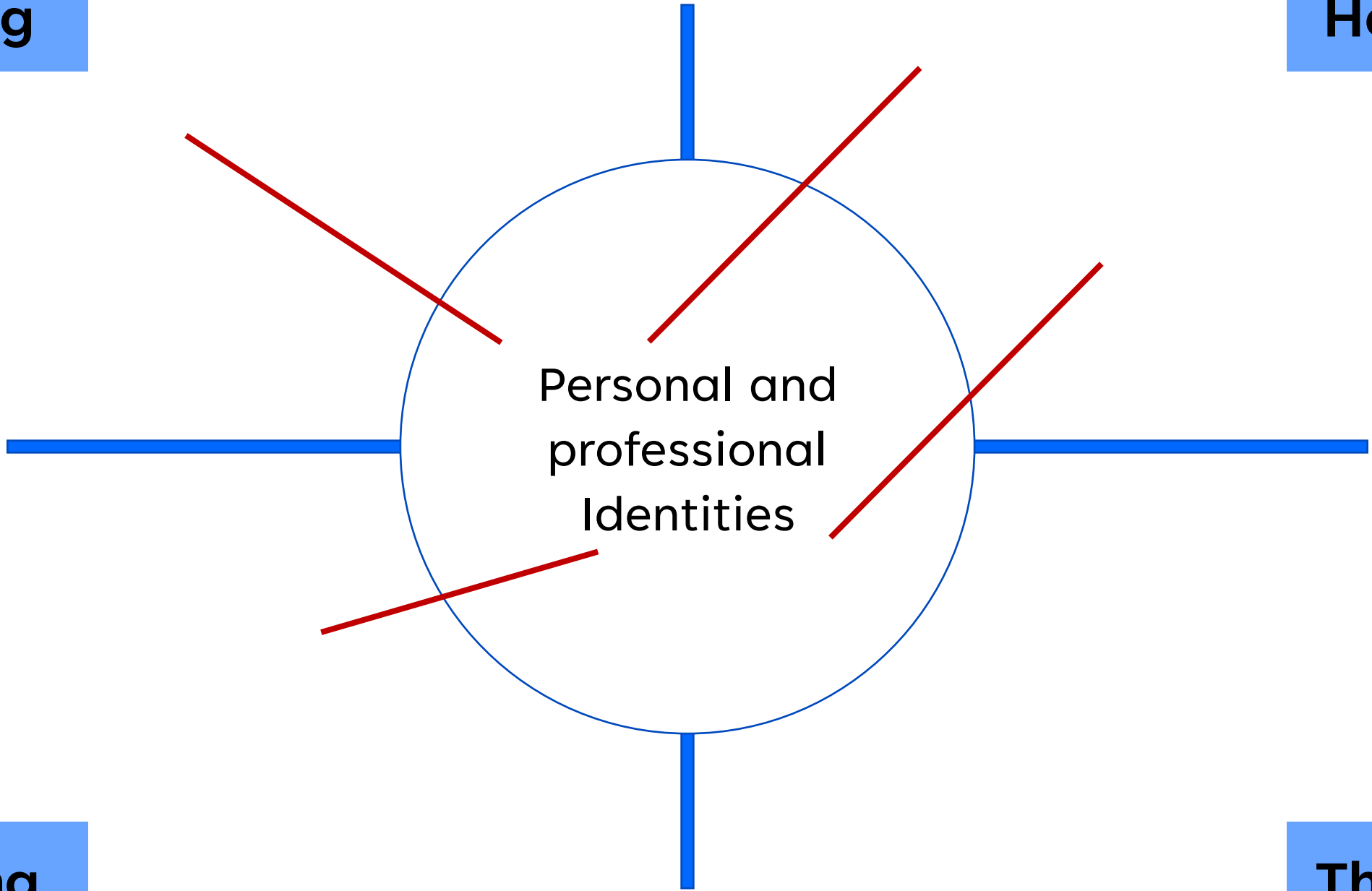
User journeys

- Journeys and narrative are interconnected

- Stories are intersectional

- User journeys help us map the ways in which people move through spaces, places and environments

Activity 2: Journey development

- Use one colour (where possible)

- Map out the indicative journey of the student from the seminar to the library

- Identify what spaces and places they maty encounter on the way (be imaginative and creative with the journey)

- Use the persona to map what the student sees, hears, feels and thinks at different points.

- 15 minutes

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│  Politics seminar   │─────│       Event         │─────│       Space         │─┐
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│                     │     │                     │     │                     │
│      Event          │─────│      Library        │─────│       Place         │─┐
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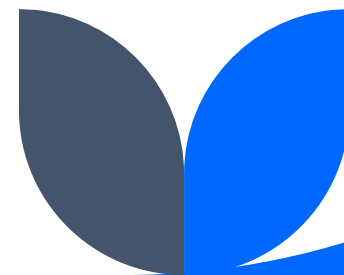
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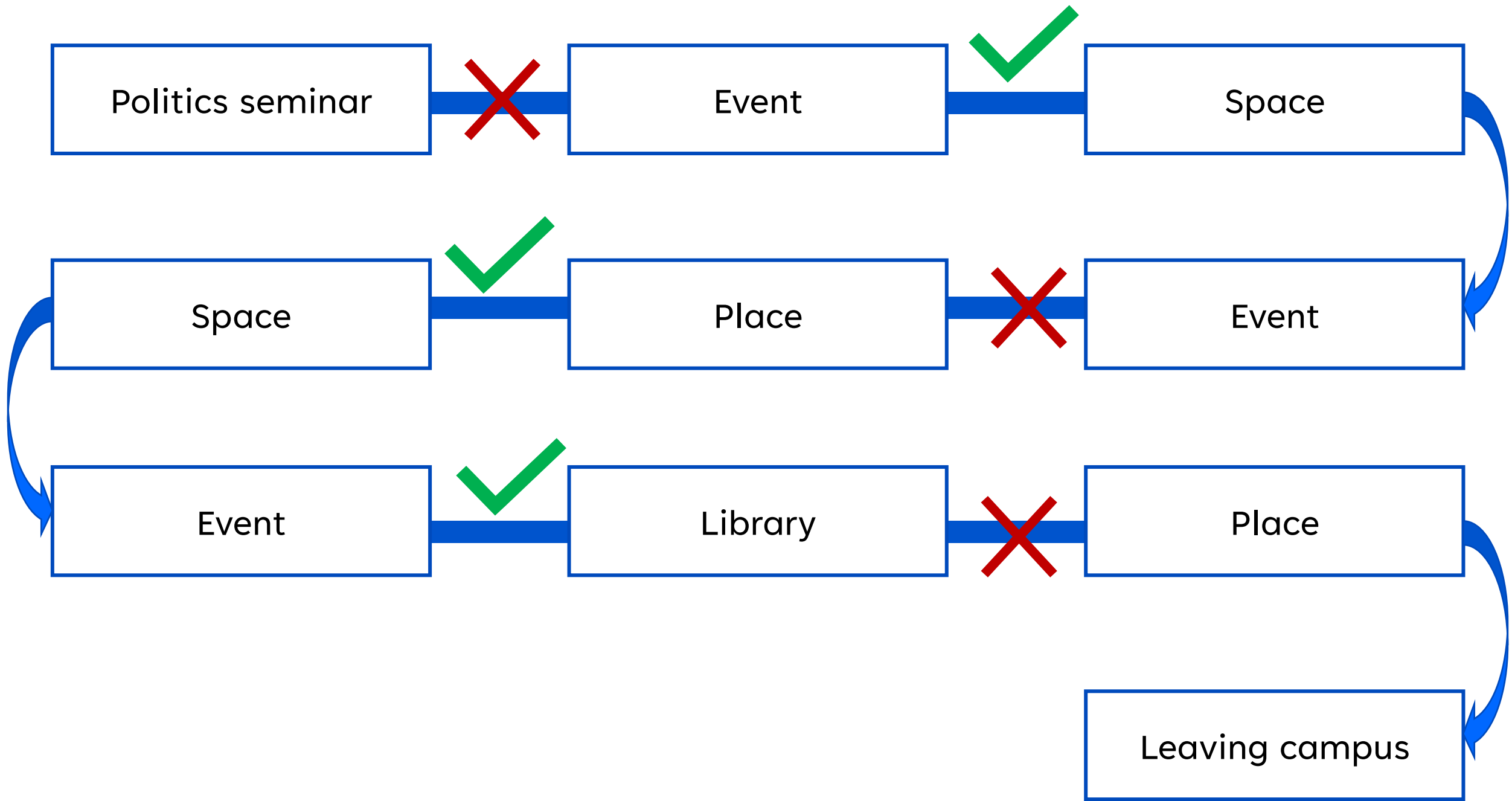
Turning points

- Turning points can be described as moments in which a journey changes for an individual and/or community. These can be small or big life, societal or even political events.

- Pain points are the challenges or barriers that an individual faces through their journey.

Activity 3: Turning points

- Using two different colours, identify the turning and pain points in the user journey.

- 5 minutes

Politics seminar	✗	Event	✓	Space
Space	✓	Place	✗	Event
Event	✓	Library	✗	Place
				Leaving campus

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Verma (2022)

Reflection

- Looking across your personas, journeys, turning and pain points, what actions or interventions can you put into place to improve the student experience?

- How might these interventions support a more inclusive and diverse curriculum?

Thank you

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