LEARNING LANDSCAPES
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND THE FORMATION OF COALESCENT SPACE

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ABOUT PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional Development can be conceived as activities that are intended to engage professionals in new learning about their professional practice (McAlpine, 2006; Webster-Wright, 2009).

Whereas, **Professional Learning** is a continuous process that builds throughout a professional's entire career (Loughran, 2010). As such, professional learning "**cannot be mandated, coerced or controlled, but can be supported, facilitated and shaped**" (Webster-Wright, 2010, p. 12).

Professional Development	Professional Learning
Organisation-driven	Learner-driven
Compliance	Agency
Transmission-led	Conversation-led
Episodic Engagement	Continuous Engagement
Learning as Acquisition	Learning as Becoming
Formal	Formal / Informal
Non-reflective	Reflective
Individual Approach	Collaborative Approach

THE CONTEXT

For professionals working in UK Higher Education, professional learning and development is a complex and messy endeavour.

In January 2017, I sent out a survey to 525 academics, **182** responded (**35%** completion rate).
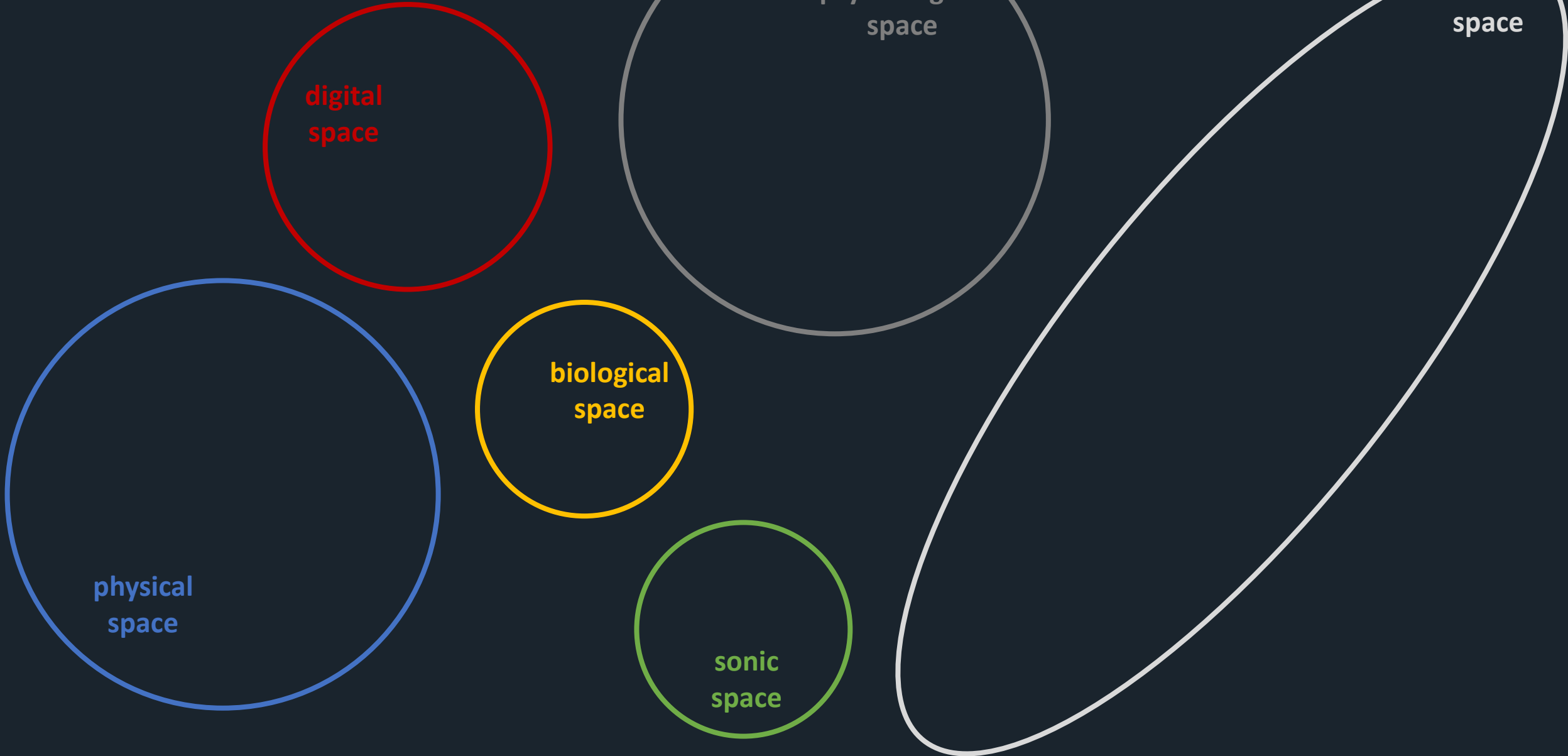These were their **"top ten" barriers** to engaging with some form of CPD:

1. Lack of **time** (69%)
2. Lack of **time to follow up afterwards** (59%)
3. Getting **release time** to attend the event (38%)
4. Too **expensive** (28%)
5. Commitments to **family members** (28%)
6. Lack of **relevance** (24%)
7. Lack of **incentives** (23%)
8. Travel to **another site / campus** (21%)
9. Lack of **encouragement** from department (19%)
10. Completely **unaware** of the event (19%)

Other **issues** arose from interviews (n:**12**) and photovoice (n:**12**):

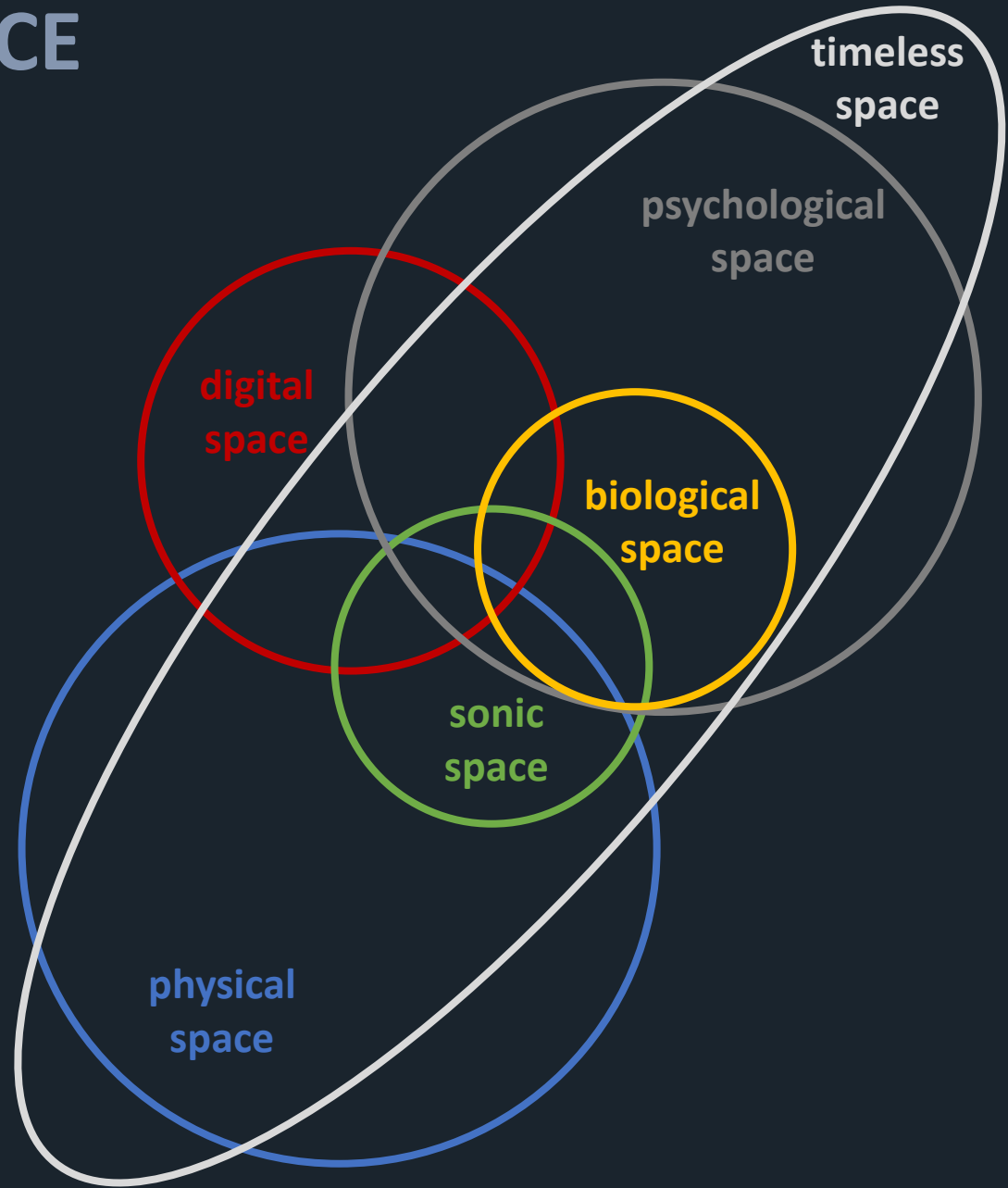- Having to learn "stuff" that often sits **outside of an academic's area of expertise** (e.g. sustainability).
- Knowing **where** to find this "stuff", or even **who** to go to find out more about this "stuff".
- Information that is **not consistent, not right, and/or keeps changing**.
- "Escaping" or "hiding" from *institutional noise* (both physical and digital interruptions).
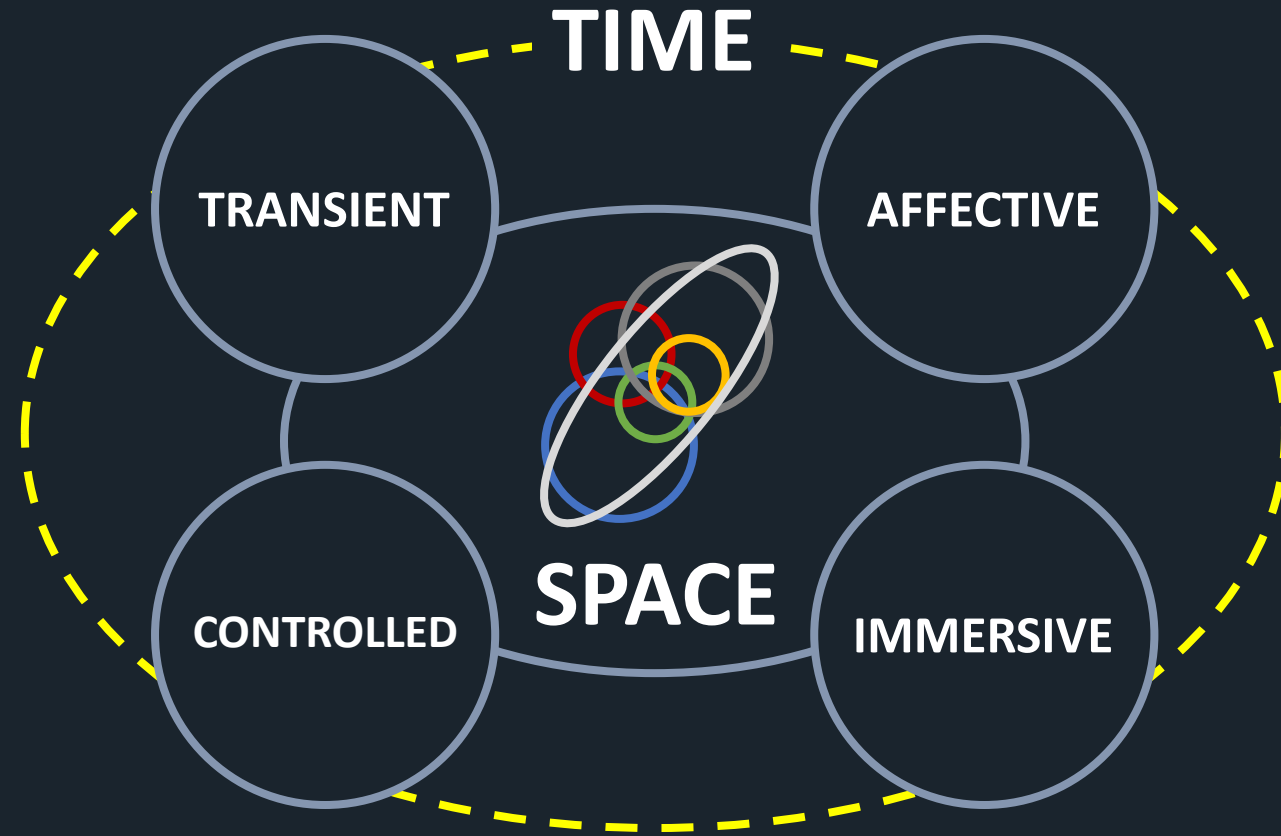- Finding a suitable **space** to learn.

TYPES OF SPACE

digital
space

psychological
space

timeless
space

biological
space

physical
space

sonic
space

COALESCENT SPACE

timeless space

psychological space

digital space

biological space

sonic space

physical space

THE IMPLICATIONS

These spatial properties will have implications on how, where and when academics go about engaging in their professional learning and development activities.

Policy Makers
- Consider creating quiet (and possibly private) workspaces.
- Ensure learning and development time is created and protected.
- Understand that many of the objectives of professional development concern changes and outcomes that are not easily measured in the traditional sense and that the measurements currently sought are often not those that that have the greatest impact on university performance.

Academic & Organisational Development Teams
- Carry out a professional development needs analysis to provide more tailored and targeted professional development for academic staff – recognising disciplinary differences.
- Recognise the value of informal and tacit professional learning as well as learning-on-the-job and design greater opportunities for such forms of activities.
- Facilitate the engagement of academics with professional development sessions through more flexible availability of opportunities (e.g. micro-learning, flipped professional learning).

Academics
- Engage in a time management course.
- Develop a professional learning network (PLN) that taps into a variety of spaces, tools and people.
- Take a reflective approach to documenting your engagement in professional learning and take note of the impact and outcomes of this engagement.

THANKS FOR LISTENING!
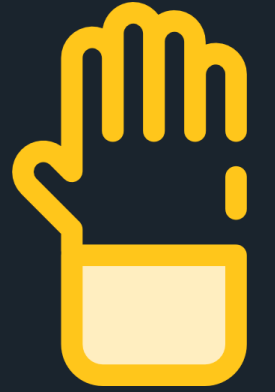
QUESTIONS?

CORE REFERENCES

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SOME **CREDITS**

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