Assessment, Recognition and the "Contact Zone" in Landscape Architecture: How Much Is "Enough"?

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Abstract

Extended Curriculum Programmes have a responsibility to validate the resources and experiences students bring to their learning environment. However, designing assessment practices that encourage diverse students to draw on their resources in order to both access and challenge disciplinary discourses can be complex. This article is framed in terms of how students balance their own experiential knowledge while engaging with the disciplinary discourse. It aims to interrogate students' negotiation of the "contact zone" and how they negotiate their brought-along resources with assessment guidelines. A multimodal social semiotic approach is taken to explore ways of contributing to a socially just pedagogy by enabling recognition of a range of students' resources, while at the same time acknowledging the need to access the conventions of the discipline. We argue for recognition as the positive side of assessment, which could enable more diverse students' resources to be acknowledged. We interrogate the meaning-making trajectories of two students, Xola and Sonwabo, in a first-year landscape architecture course. While both students bring their own resources into a spatial model project, they each have varying "success" in mediating these in relation to the dominant conventions of landscape architectural design.

Keywords: contact zone; assessment; recognition; social semiotics; landscape architecture; design education

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Introduction

South Africa has some of the world's highest wealth disparities and these are particularly evident in what has been called a "bimodal" education system (Spaull 2013). Initially, higher education attempted to address these disparities in education through a "support discourse" (Hlatshwayo and Shawa 2020, 28) that focused on "bridging gaps" and addressing "underpreparedness". Between 2015 and 2017, higher education across South Africa was shaken by the #FeesMustFall and decolonising education movements. These movements turn the concept of "underpreparedness" on its head: "the question of what constitutes the margins where, when and for whom, is perhaps more open than we have imagined" (Thesen 2013, 5). Decolonising education movements challenge the status quo and critique the centre's authority to define who is on the margins. Higher education institutions, including Extended Curriculum Programmes, have a responsibility to not only validate the resources and experiences students bring to their learning environment, but to design assessment practices that encourage diverse students to draw on their resources in order to both access and challenge disciplinary discourses. In light of this, this research draws on a multimodal social semiotic approach to interrogate assessment practices, focusing on a first-year course in landscape architecture. A multimodal social semiotic approach shifts from a focus on "bridging gaps" in competence, to the recognition of the rich experiences, agency and resourcefulness of students. The aim is to recognise and validate the knowledge, resources and experiences that students bring with them to higher education. In this process, we hope to address past educational imbalances and inequalities and open up spaces for diverse, Global South[1] perspectives.

Landscape architecture is, broadly, the design of outdoor spaces and material landscapes to enhance human experience (Swaffield 2006). The landscape architecture industry tends to operate within local and global social and economic structures that are mostly dominated by Global North and single-perspective views. Consequently, the role of inclusive pedagogies for diversity carries a double burden. As Cadman (2013) reminds educators, we have an ethical responsibility to not only create "safe" educational spaces that value diverse students' resources, but to ensure that students may both access and challenge the dominant discourse. This article unpacks this double burden or dilemma. Pratt (1991, 34) makes use of the term "contact zone" to refer to "social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power". We problematise Pratt's (1991) contact zone in terms of how to recognise the ways in which students negotiate their experiential knowledge in the classroom. In her writing, Pratt (1991) shows how meaning-makers operating in the contact zone produce texts that represent their "point of entry" into the dominant perspective. Our article presents a case study of two first-year landscape architectural projects designed by Xola and Sonwabo.[2] The texts that students made can be seen as

[1] We refer to the Global North and Global South not as geographical locations, but as ideological perspectives.

[2] The students' names are pseudonyms.

realisations of their engagement in the contact zone. The project brief required students to design a three-dimensional spatial model based on a chosen narrative, drawing on students' resources and experiences. Aspects of the "canon" or discourse of landscape architecture were presented both explicitly to the students through the project assessment guidelines and implicitly through formative and summative assessment practices. While both students brought their own resources into the spatial model project, each had varying "success" in mediating these resources in relation to landscape architectural design.

Recognition and the Contact Zone: Students as Re-Makers

This article embraces a social semiotic approach to pedagogy and assessment that responds to growing concerns around single or dominant educational perspectives that may exclude or silence the diverse resources, experience, knowledge and practices of students in the landscape architecture design studio. This approach aims not only to validate the resources and experiences students bring to their learning environment, but to encourage students to draw on their resources in order to access and challenge the landscape architecture discourse. Social semiotics explores "sign-making" as an activity that is influenced by social processes and values (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 35). A social semiotic approach focuses on the individual meaning-maker's interest, their use of available meaning-making resources and their social contexts (Jewitt 2014). What is important and useful about a social semiotic view on assessment is that it works across modes, as sets of socially shaped resources, yet also provides a way of looking at student meaning-making in terms of socially meaningful tensions and oppositions as instantiated through textual structure. Texts are conceived as being shaped both by students' understanding of the specific socio-discursive context and also by what students bring to the act of representation, their representational resources.

"Re-making" is a useful concept that brings together the theoretical, semiotic and pedagogical facets of this research. Kress's (2010) use of the term "(re)-makers" signals the social semiotic perspective underlying this research. The meaning-maker does not only assemble but *transforms* resources in a process of re-making new signs.

> The meanings of these practices are present in the signifiers as a potential for meaning and are carried "forward" in constantly transformed fashion into new signs, remade in the light of the resources that (re)-makers of signs bring with them. (Kress 2010, 69)

This focus on the meaning-(re)maker places emphasis on their interests, resourcefulness and agency. Re-making also refers to the aim of this research, to develop and redesign landscape architecture pedagogies for diversity. The work of this re-making is addressed pedagogically through changing orders of visibility and validation of students' resources. It connects to students' participation in re-making landscape architecture education by accessing the dominant landscape discourse through their own position and experiences. The concept of re-making echoes both the New London Group's

(1996, 87) "Transformed Practice" and Kell's (2015) notion of "making people happen".

> Here we also need to consider the *capability* of the actor to *recognize* the aptness of a model, tool or artifact for expressing and producing meaning, as well as their *capacity* to *realize* or materialize the meaning they wish to express, using the resources that are available. (Kell 2015, 440)

This re-making of landscape pedagogy for diversity is framed in terms of how students operate in the contact zone (Pratt 1991) and negotiate between their own experiences and resources and the landscape architecture canon.

There is a need for assessment practices that ascertain what students know, and to make visible the resources that students have. Kress (2010, 183; italics in original) asks, "'Is our interest in producing *conformity to authority* around "knowledge"?' or 'Is our interest actually in *environments and conditions of learning*?'" As Pratt (1991) shows, meaning-makers operating in the contact zone produce texts that respond to dominant meaning-making practices. A switch in attention from compliance to an emphasis on student positionalities and meaning-making could widen and diversify what counts as evidence of learning (Archer 2021). Assessment is a question of attending to either measures of conformity or to principles of semiotic engagement (Kress 2010, 183). Assessment practices can be regarded as falling on a continuum from "judgement" to "recognition". "Judgement" tends to point to metrics of conformity, whereas recognition is about observing resources in terms of some existing framework, surfacing these resources and integrating them in a range of contexts (Archer 2014) and contact zones (Pratt 1991). Recognition can thus be regarded as the positive side of assessment, and it could enable more varied students' resources to be acknowledged in the process.

The Landscape Architecture Project and Assessment Guidelines

The context of the landscape architectural learning environment attempts to simulate the characteristics of landscape architectural practice in order for students to be equipped for employment. Design studios are a common component of design education (Alon-Mozes 2006, 30; Brandt et al. 2013; Van Dooren et al. 2013, 56), where students are expected to learn to work in and across multiple modes, such as two-dimensional drawings and three-dimensional models, in order to engage in the conventions of landscape architectural practices. Studio courses are largely based on assignments that relate to the types of projects and contexts in which landscape architectural professionals may work. A large part of the studio subject culture is the "crit": an informal discussion between the student and their peers, mentors or lecturers about the student's work, with the aim to assist the student in refining their design (Belluigi 2016; Brandt et al. 2013).

Here we explore the case study of a spatial model project in a first-year landscape architectural design studio subject (Price 2020; Price and Archer 2021). The brief given to the students required them to design a three-dimensional model that spatially

expresses their chosen narrative. The students drew on or produced a range of narratives for this project that originated from very diverse contexts. They were inspired or prompted by personal experiences, movies, stories, music and news or real-life events. Some students' narratives took place in a domestic setting and some made connections to rural homesteads in the Eastern Cape. Other narratives were based on movies the students had seen. Ethical approval was granted before the case study began and students signed consent forms if they chose to participate. The students produced three or four models over six weeks and attended two "crits" per week—one with a lecturer and another with a peer group. At the end of the six weeks, the students presented their narrative and all their progress models to an examination panel.

Through the design studio, students are exposed to values and conventions of landscape architectural practice. These values and conventions are conveyed to students implicitly through "crit" discussions and theory classes, and explicitly through the assessment guidelines and reflective tasks. The assessment guidelines for the spatial model are given to students and discussed at the same time as the initial model brief. These guidelines are the distilled principles or values behind the assessment "criteria", which include elements such as "the final model is a unified and multifunctional composition", "the model represents an (interactive) spatial experience and avoids overuse of literal representations and two-dimensional symbols", and "the spatial experience is more than just a single sculptural element". These "principles" or guidelines are different to "criteria" for assessment. Criteria involve "those properties, dimensions or characteristics by which student performance is appraised. Criteria apply in formulating judgement and may be articulated and pre-specified or remain unstated" (Wyatt-Smith and Kimber 2009, 80). These guidelines afford an opportunity for educators and students to engage in the contact zone: the guidelines can be seen as a set of questions that would allow assessors to be open to the unexpected and innovative ways that students may choose to respond.

The assessment guidelines for the spatial model project can be summarised as five key principles: abstraction, spatial awareness, modality, cohesion, and effort. We will discuss each of these briefly. *Abstraction* is highly valued in landscape architecture as a representational practice, but also as a way of conceptualising and synthesising information from often complex situations. A typical example is that a student may wish to convey "love" in their model and then construct this using two-dimensional symbols such as a heart shape or the colour red. However, the principle of abstraction necessitates that students have to engage abstractly with their concepts and express them in terms of the way a user moves through or interacts with the spaces and forms of the model, rather than through the use of symbols. Using the example of "love", this could be conveyed through a space that feels secure or warm or generous. Here students need to design an installation that users can experience in three dimensions, or walk *through*, as opposed to a sculpture or statue that users can only view or walk *around*. Designing landscape architectural spaces requires the second principle, that of *spatial awareness*, in terms of technical aspects such as scale and ergonomics. The principle of spatial awareness

emphasises learning to make meaning in three-dimensional space, with a focus on the spatial experience of an imagined user. Consideration of the user also implies some consideration of user experience in terms of impression or comfort.

The third underlying principle in spatial design is *modality*. Modality is a linguistic term that refers to how credible or realistic the constructed text is (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 155). Modality speaks to the way that landscape architects communicate their designs to others in terms of credibility. Although the term "modality" is not used in the students' assessment rubric, the examiners look at the extent to which they could imagine themselves in the students' installation, or how possible it would be to construct the students' imagined installation.

A fourth principle is that of *cohesion*. Cohesion is the degree to which elements of a composition fit or appear to fit together. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, 203) term this "framing": how the compositional elements of a text may be connected, related or distinct. Cohesion underpins landscape architectural values and determines the ways in which designs respond to context; for example, landscape designs often aim to blend or tie in to their surroundings. In the spatial model project, cohesion is determined through the degree to which the elements of the model are brought together to convey the narrative. Cohesion exists on a continuum: when maximally expressed in a text it may contribute to the user's clear understanding or interpretation of the text; when minimally expressed (intentionally or unintentionally) it may result in disconnected and fragmented understandings of a text.

Finally, the value of *effort* is recognised in the project. Effort is related to care and thorough exploration of model-building and design processes. This requires students to engage in the affordances of different materials and model-building techniques to achieve particular forms. The notion of "effort" emphasises values in landscape architecture regarding attention to detail, precision, neatness and how to show care in their work. Rewarding effort is not new in assessing multimodal texts. For instance, Davis and Reed (2003, 101) refer to "excellence in execution" as a key component in grading students' multimodal projects. Particularly for young designers, assessors may value effort over design experience.

Next, we look at the ways in which two students, Xola and Sonwabo, negotiated experiential knowledge and academic knowledge and the conventions of landscape architecture, and the ways in which these more open assessment guidelines could be used as a set of questions in order to recognise these negotiations.

Xola: Spatial Representation of Affect

Xola is a young man from Ngcobo in the Eastern Cape and he had never been to Cape Town before coming to study landscape architecture. As the eldest of four siblings, he hopes to find a good job in order to support his family. As a young designer with limited exposure to conventional landscape architectural design precedents, he may be equipped

with less "well-acknowledged" resources (Mavers 2007). The way in which this more open and process-oriented assessment task presents the opportunity to re-semiotise his experiential resources into spatial experiences provided a successful entry point into landscape architectural design. He managed to successfully negotiate his resources in relation to a spatial design and was able to meet some (or enough) of the expectations of the landscape architectural discipline. It is interesting that in response to dominant design practices, Xola contributed to the diversification of forms and meanings of designs.

As mentioned earlier, the students were asked to choose a narrative meaningful to them and then design a model that conveys their chosen narrative through a spatial experience. As a first task, the students were asked to represent their narrative graphically, on a poster, and present it to a small group of students and lecturers. Xola presented his graphic narrative, which is based on a short story about two young boys who are friends. One of the boys tricks his friend, who is blind, and abandons him in a forest. The boy is scared and cannot walk home alone. A fisherman, who hears him calling for help, leads the boy to safety. In his final model presentation, Xola recounted another story of a person who goes to town at night with a friend who later returns home without him. Having no money, the main character feels scared but also betrayed by his friend who left him. It is not clear if Xola is this character in the second story, but in an earlier "crit" he admitted that he could identify with the boy who is blind: "When I grew up I [had a] friend who betrayed me, so that reminds me of this." The group discussed Xola's narrative in order to identify key themes. The themes that Xola abstracted from the narrative are emotions such as fear, disappointment, loneliness and trust. He drew on his own experiences of these themes, which he re-made into creative spatial experiences within his three-dimensional model.

Xola designed four iterations of his model over the course of the project. In his earlier models, Xola made use of literal or symbolic representation to convey aspects of his narrative. For example, his first model included a large sculpture of a knife that represents the theme of betrayal in his narrative. This kind of literal or symbolic representation is not encouraged or valued in the discipline of landscape architecture; as mentioned earlier, more value is placed on meaning conveyed through abstracted spatial experience. However, through his design trajectory on the course, Xola refined his models, conceptualising his own experiences more abstractly and in the spatial mode. In this way, he began to negotiate the contact zone between his resources and the dominant values of the landscape architecture classroom.

Xola's final model comprised two levels: on the ground floor are two significant structures: a "double storey" tower and an enclosed room. There is no clear entrance to the installation; users may enter from any direction and may freely walk around the perimeter of the tower and room through a narrow corridor between the tower and the room, or users may walk into the room from an opening on its inner corner. A switchback staircase leads from the ground level to a platform directly above the

enclosed room. Xola did not design a structured path for his users to follow. They are invited to explore the spaces in any sequence and to move between the lower and upper levels. While other students relied on more symmetrical or sequential layouts to convey the themes from their narratives, Xola designed a non-chronological and dynamic movement route that activates various types of spaces within the installation and contributes to the *cohesion* of the model. In learning to draw on cohesion more overtly, Xola demonstrated his conscious negotiation between his experiential resources and the values of the discipline.

Figure 1: Xola's final model

Xola drew on his own experiences of betrayal and disappointment and reframed these within landscape architectural meaning-making trajectories. He designed the themes of loneliness, disappointment and trust as abstractions by drawing on the visual and spatial resource of *visual permeability*. The room on the ground floor is enclosed on all four sides except for a small entrance on one corner. Because the room is dark, Xola explained that "someone is going to feel lonely and scared". Xola demonstrates the use of spatial composition by limiting the visual permeability of the ground, wall and sky planes, restricting the amount of light entering the space. If the wall planes were closer together, a user would more likely feel constricted. However, the distance between the wall planes is generous, contributing to the feeling of emptiness or loneliness. A person standing alone in this dark room may feel the impression of fear, loneliness or

abandonment, connecting to the experience of the character in Xola's narrative. The darkness of the room may also be inspired by the dark forest in Xola's narrative. In landscape architecture, forests tend to be viewed as positive in terms of ecological habitats and carbon sequestration. Xola's dark and eerie forest could be seen as a reminder of the diverse range of meanings of forests, especially in South Africa where trees are often associated with crime (Potgieter et al. 2019). In this way, he is able to access landscape architectural spatial design while challenging conventional meanings of forests, to some extent.

Xola designed an experience of a lack of *visual permeability* of the tower to express the theme of betrayal or disappointment that may be experienced by the user or visitor he imagines visiting the installation. From the ground level there is no apparent entrance or window into the tower. Walking up the stairs, the user may hope to find an entrance. Upon reaching the upper platform, they can peep into the tower through a window but cannot access the space because of the absence of a door or entrance. The *spatial engagement* Xola designed for the user is heteroglossic and dialogically contractive (Ravelli and McMurtrie 2016, 14, 75): users can choose where to move and may experience the space from multiple perspectives, but they cannot access every space in the installation. This experience conveys Xola's theme of disappointment or betrayal in his narrative: "It's disappointing to just walk in here hoping you can get in here, but you can't." Daniel Libeskind's design of the Jewish Museum in Berlin was discussed in the studio class and the ways in which he makes use of voids to represent the emptiness and loss of the Holocaust (Young 2000). Xola's similar use of voids and absences shows a nuanced and sophisticated design response to his narrative. In this way, Xola demonstrates a successful negotiation between his own experiences and ways of representing those experiences in the landscape architecture classroom.

A *figure-ground* is a plan drawing in which the built form or "figure" is shown in black and the "ground" is shown in white, representing the resultant spaces around and between the built forms. Because the "ground" is the realm in which landscape architects work, this is often perceived as "positive" space compared with the "negative" space of the built forms. Analysing the figure-ground reveals that the enclosed room and the tower, representing fear, loneliness and disappointment, are disconnected from each other, separated by a thin narrow space. The room and tower are characterised by voids, absences of light and access, which may signal the sense of loss in the betrayal. The enclosed, dark room ensures minimal visual permeability and low social contact. In contrast to the disconnections created by the tower and enclosed room, the stairs and platform, representing hope and trust, connect the room and tower space. Xola designed the stairs to represent "hope that when someone betrayed you there's someone who can help you". From the upper platform users can see above the handrail to view the surroundings. This high visual permeability and social contact restores a sense of *cohesion* to the model and may point to the restoration of hope by the fisherman in Xola's narrative. Xola not only accessed landscape architectural design practices by drawing on his experiential resources, but successfully engaged with key aspects

underlying the assessment criteria. We have looked at how Xola represented the themes of his story in several different ways; for example, disappointment is conveyed by void, inaccessibility and "figure" or negative space. This layering of multiple meanings within spatial design is valued in landscape architecture and strengthens the use of cohesion in the model.

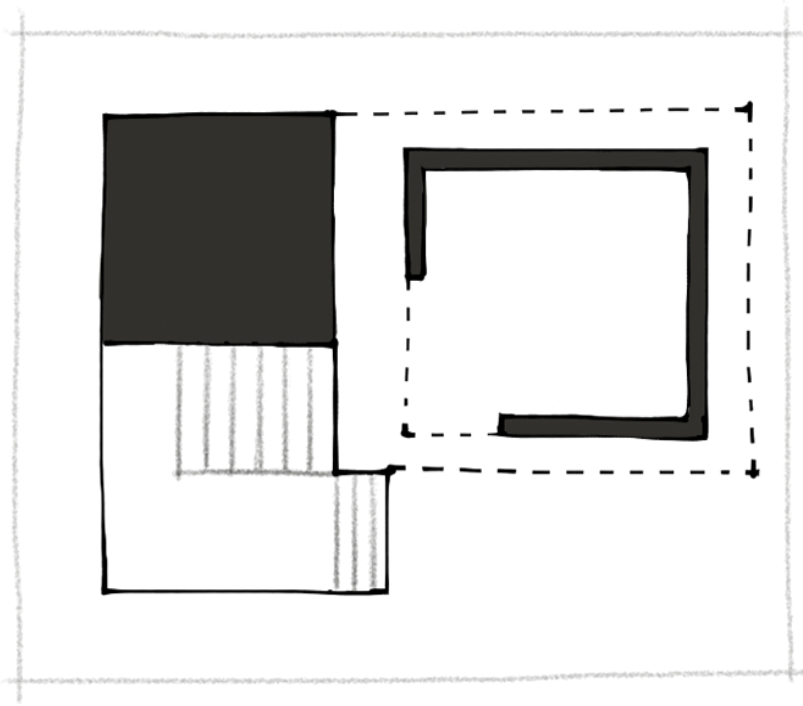

Figure 2: Figure-ground representation of Xola's spatial model

Xola also engaged with the *materiality* of the construction. Xola's model is the result of a refined transformation of material resources. Instead of making use of found objects, Xola considered the affordances of the material resources and re-made these into his desired spaces. The walls of the ground floor room, for example, are made from corrugated cardboard. Xola has chosen to make use of the vertical corrugations to create the folds for the corners of the room, as well as providing structural support to the platform above. The ground plane extends past the tower and room to create a thin narrow walkway around the edge of the model. This demonstrates Xola's attention to detail, care and consideration in the design and construction of the model. This attention to detail or what we call "effort" is particularly valued in landscape architecture, as represented in the assessment guidelines.

Xola's narrative evokes strong feelings and emotions, which he abstracted into spatial experiences within his model design. Instead of labelling Xola as an inexperienced designer with low exposure to landscape design precedents, recognition-based assessment highlights his resourcefulness in designing spaces that are creative and original. In this first spatial design project of his studies, Xola carefully began to negotiate the contact zone between his experiences and aspects that are valued in landscape architecture, such as abstraction, spatial engagement, cohesion and effort.

Sonwabo: Recognition of Experiential Resources

Sonwabo is a young man (he was 22 at the time of the study) from Lady Frere in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The fifth of seven children, he took a year off after completing Grade 12 (matric) while he decided what to study. This section explores how Sonwabo successfully negotiated the contact zone between drawing on his own resources and experiential knowledge to meet "enough" of the criteria for the spatial model project. Sonwabo struggled with the abstract nature of the project and the "canon" of landscape architecture. However, he drew on other valued resources such as care and making use of the experiential knowledge of playing soccer to move his design trajectory forward. These resources that he brought to his design process translated successfully into some of the valued aspects of the discipline, such as spatial awareness, modality, cohesion and effort.

Sonwabo's narrative is brief and does not include as much layering and complexity as those of other students: "When I grew up I thought I'd be a professional soccer player, but through the challenges I ended up doing Landscape Architecture." While other students abstracted or conceptualised their models through the themes they identified, Sonwabo's fourth model design drew from the concrete, his own experiential knowledge and resources of playing soccer in the townships: "I created the play park which is … where I used to play [soccer]". Sonwabo chose to use the word "created", which is an apt description of his design process. Sonwabo did not copy or replicate existing spaces; he used his knowledge and experiences to design an idealised park that responds to particular contexts and challenges. For example, although he explained that when he plays soccer with his friends, they usually find some stones to define the goal area, he designed goal posts at opposite ends of his soccer field. Although the model brief suggested that students' designs would be installed in Green Point Urban Park, Sonwabo ignored this instruction of the task and instead chose a familiar township neighbourhood as the setting for his model. Sonwabo also re-semiotised resources from his previous models into his fourth model. Sonwabo's first model was a soccer stadium, and Models 2 and 3 were children's play structures in a park. He brought these into his fourth model: "I tried to link them together, like when he was playing in the playground there will be a lot of people in the stadium. The cars and everybody watching, playing." Through drawing on these experiential resources, Sonwabo's final model demonstrates high modality; in other words, his model credibly responds to a particular context. In his play park design, Sonwabo drew on ideational resources such as *purpose*: his final

model depicts a play park that incorporates a range of *activities* and related *macro-genres* such as a toddler's play area, a lawn, a hedge, a car park, a soccer field, spectator seating and paths or movement routes. This range of activities also shows a significant level of cohesion in his model.

Figure 3: Sonwabo's Model 4

By placing cardboard "people" in his model, Sonwabo foregrounded how he designed the park with people in mind, responding to the needs and activities of the potential users of the site and meeting the criterion relating to modality. Adding people to the model also signals significant spatial awareness, as Sonwabo's design strongly relates to the human scale. His design includes a range of interpersonal meanings such as *affect*, *interaction* and *identity*. Through affect, Sonwabo drew on resources such as *belonging* and *comfort*. In terms of belonging, he designed accessible and inclusive spaces. The play park provides access for both vehicles and pedestrians: there is a pathway running axially through the park, integrating the park into the surrounding neighbourhood. By designing seating stands for spectators and by including a large shade tree in his park, Sonwabo took the comfort of his users into account.

The degree of interaction in the site, particularly the difference in *spatial engagement* between vehicles and pedestrians, realises ideational meanings valued in landscape

architecture, such as prioritising the needs of pedestrians over vehicles. The spatial engagement for pedestrians can be described as heteroglossic and dialogically expansive, compared with the limited, monoglossic spatial engagement designed for vehicles. Interaction in the play park also includes a range of different zones and activities that allow for a variety of *social distances*. Spectator seating provides opportunities for personal distance; social distances may be experienced in the play areas and soccer space, and pedestrians passing through the space may experience public distances. This range of spaces also widens the types of identities users may adopt in the space, including children, vehicle owners, pedestrians, people who live or work in the community, soccer players and spectators.

Sonwabo's final model demonstrates high levels of *modality* as an interpersonal resource. The *scale* of his model is accurate and resolved in terms of the size of elements and paths within the park. His design allows for a high degree of user engagement and participation. In terms of *functional aesthetics*, where use or function influences the form, the forms and spaces relate strongly to the context and activities in those spaces. His model is also meticulously and carefully constructed, demonstrating *effort*.

Textual resources, such as *coherence*, *degree of enclosure* and *cohesion*, reinforce the meanings of the play park. *Coherence*, the degree to which users understand how to move through the space, is realised through a series of subtle textual resources. Understanding of movement and entry can be interpreted through *hierarchy*. For example, the primary entrance for people intending to use the play park is wider than the secondary pathway running along the edge of the park. For pedestrians who access the play park from this path, Sonwabo has designed a small *threshold*, transitioning users from the public park to the semi-public spaces of the play park. *Degree of enclosure* demarcates the various spaces within the park; for example, the toddlers' play area is weakly bound (Stenglin 2008) by a low railing. The degree of enclosure responds to the needs of users in terms of protecting young children from running into vehicular spaces, but also ensures parents or caregivers a high degree of visibility of the children. The spectator seating on three sides of the soccer field also creates a weakly bound space, separating the soccer space from the other spaces while maintaining high visibility in terms of security.

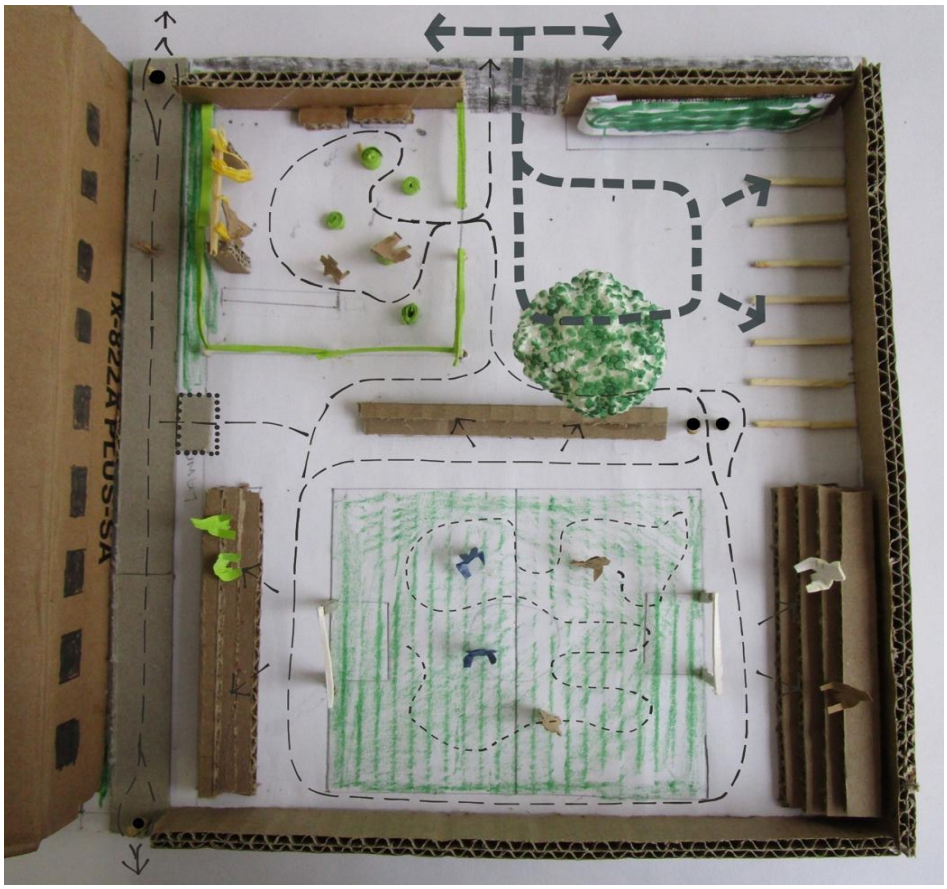

Figure 4: Analysis of movement routes in Sonwabo's Model 4 (Pedestrian routes are shown by thin dashed lines and vehicular movement routes are shown by thick dashed lines)

Drawing from experiences of space in townships, Sonwabo made use of *framing* to achieve cohesion in his design. Apart from entry points, the play park is surrounded by a wall or fence to demarcate the edges and to ensure that people "understand where the play park ends or where it starts". Sonwabo provided additional framing around the toddler play area and placed two bollards between the car parking area and the soccer field space. This signals Sonwabo's uptake of landscape values relating to *qualities of place*, such as designing safe spaces for young children and the separation of pedestrian and vehicular spaces. Cohesion is also achieved in the way that each space is connected by a network of *movement routes* that pass by the various spaces. This type of movement circulation, where pathways are independent and where there are multiple arrival points, is described by Ravelli and McMurtrie (2016, 135) as "parataxis".

Throughout his design trajectory, Sonwabo demonstrated how he brought his own resources and experiential knowledge to his spatial model design trajectory. Using a rubric or a more "tick-box" oriented approach to assessment, Sonwabo may not have

passed this task due to the lack of abstraction in his spatial model. However, the recognition-based approach focused on what he *did* achieve, rather than what he *did not*, for instance his engagement in spatial awareness, modality, cohesion and effort. Discussing this in Sonwabo's presentation examination, one of the examiners admitted that while abstraction is "something that you need to be able to do", the way Sonwabo approaches his project, "I think it's good enough". This example has demonstrated how more open assessment practices can provide a space for students to successfully negotiate their own resources in order to *access* and *transform* dominant ways of knowing.

Final Comments

This article has proposed moving away from "the use of rubrics as rigid, compartmentalized checklists of skills or meeting of criteria" (Anderson and Kachorsky 2019, 328) and has argued for assessment practices that make visible students' resources. Recognition is more than "noticing" students' resources; instead, it is a pedagogical approach that identifies and valorises the experiential, social and semiotic resources students bring with them to the learning environment. Kerfoot and Hyltenstam describe this as constructing "different orders of visibility" (2017, 7) that not only provide connections between the classroom and students' everyday lives but endorse resources that may have been previously unnoticed. Recognition is an antidote to a single perspective pedagogy and the imbalances this has produced in the past. Examples of guidelines for assessment according to this approach include the recruitment of "apt" resources for meaning-making, how connections are made across modes and genres, insightful reflection on the process of making, and taking into account formative feedback from others in the process (cf. Archer 2019). Designing assessments to accommodate and harness increasing diversity in terms of language, culture and educational preparedness within the student population is becoming critical in contexts where diversity is a feature of higher education.

We have shown how successful engagement in the contact zone between students' resources and disciplinary discourses can result in the transformation of resources, producing new and diverse landscape architectural forms and spaces. The concept of transformation is fundamental to assessment for recognition, since meaning-making involves more than the *use* of a system, but the *transformation* of available resources. Here students engage in the contact zone between their own resources and the canon. In this conceptualisation of students as re-makers, human agency and resourcefulness are placed at the centre of meaning-making. The nature of the spatial model project examined in this article provides students with low-stakes opportunities to experiment and take risks, but also to engage with how to work with alternatives in the design process. This redesign of pedagogical tasks enables assessment practices to draw on diverse students' resources that are a foil to the single dominant perspective that could exclude or silence students' resources, experiences, knowledge and practices.

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