

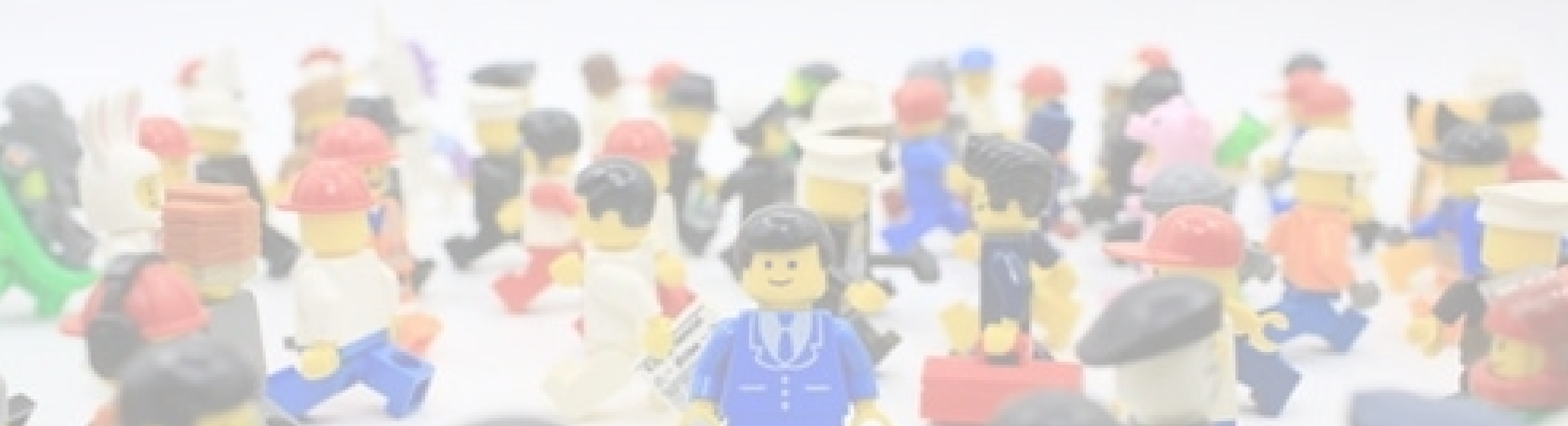


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LEGOlising the Third Space: Exploring Professional Identity and Pathways



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Tell three things.... Who is in the room?

What is your job title?

What part of your
institutional structure
do you work in?

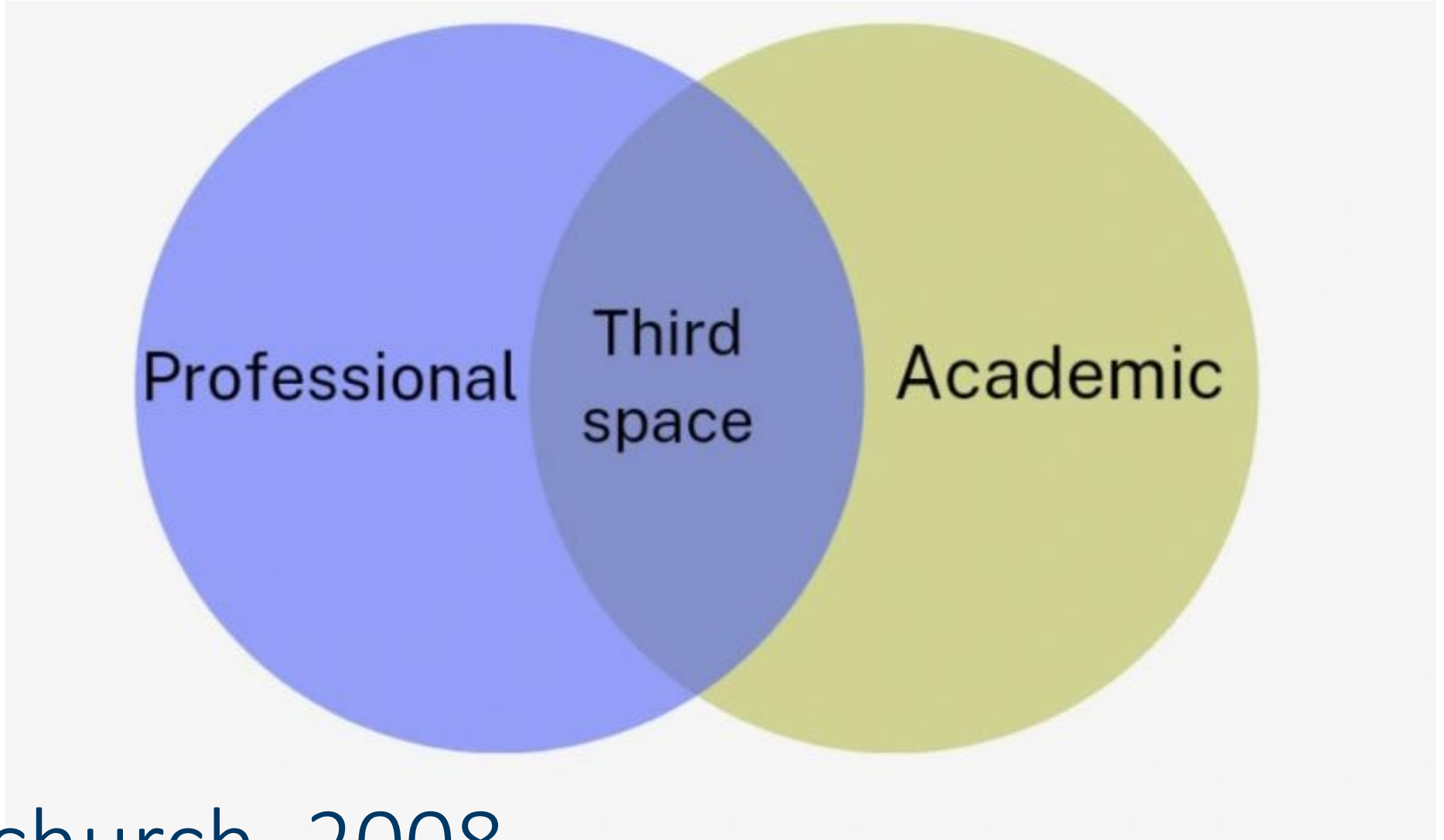
What are **3** things
you find yourself
doing regularly?
(not email!)

What are **3** impactful
/ important things you
find yourself doing
occasionally?

Who are **3** people /
teams you interact
with, outside your
immediate sphere?

What are **3** words
that describe skills
you are proud of?

3rd Space Professionals



Celia Whitchurch, 2008

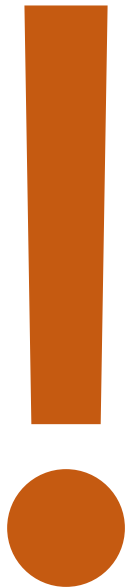
3rd Space Professionals: what?

An emergent territory lying between academic and professional domains, where less bounded forms of professional can be found. The work in this space comprises aspects of both academic and professional activities, and it is carried out by blended professionals with mixed backgrounds and portfolios. Characteristic of the third space is the existence of mixed teams whose members can be considered higher education professionals
(Freeman and Price, 2024)



If this ISN'T you, please don't leave!

You don't have to self-identify as a '3rd Space Professional' to get value from today's conversations about our identities, capacities, and cross-functional collaborations as people enhancing the PGR space.





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Does any of this resonate?

Strategy AND Research Culture AND PGR:
from policy design to curriculum to
supporting academic staff to PGR wellbeing

Boundary spanning practices:
Straddling central services &
faculties/colleges/Schools

Cross-functional
partnerships that improve
PGR experience

Shared goals, but different
accountability structures

Innovation AND Tension:
Scope to make change, not
matched with resource

Knowledge brokering
and trust building

‘Grey literature’ scholarship

Emotional labour and
other invisible work

Institutional ambiguity:
liminality identity

Cross-institutional
collaborations

Translation and
mediation: align
academic expectations
and institutional policy

Professional recognition:
contracts and career paths may
not reflect responsibilities

Role fluidity vs rigid
institutional structures

Influencing without
the title / status



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LEGO TIME!





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Pick up a Lego base-
plate

Pick up a maximum
of 20 pieces of Lego

Build the story of
where you are at in
your career
*(Do this in the
delightful quiet of
your own mind)*



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Now pick up more Lego
*(no rules on how much,
but sharing is caring)*

Build around your career
the connections and
partnerships of your
work

Use yellow bricks to
represent enablers, and
black bricks to represent
barriers to your career
progression



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A large pile of colorful LEGO bricks in various shapes and sizes, including yellow, orange, blue, purple, and green. The bricks are scattered and overlapping, creating a textured background.

TIME TO SHARE!

Reflective questions

How did your career journey match or differ from others?

How did your professional connectedness match or differ from others?

What 'hidden curriculum' routes to career development opportunities have you spotted?

To think about...

How can we individually and collectively contribute to furthering the conversation and culture change towards research professionals as an equally recognised and rewarding professional trajectory?