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Thesis V2, Experiential Learning, Game Design & Relationship Systems Intelligence

## ABSTRACT

Experiential learning is a pedagogical approach that emphasizes hands-on experience and reflection. It has been widely used in various fields such as psychology, education, and business. Game design, critical play, and systems thinking are approaches that can enhance the effectiveness of experiential learning by providing a unique way to learn and practice skills in a safe and engaging environment. This paper discusses the benefits of integrating game design, critical play, and systems thinking into experiential learning and how it can lead to the development of essential skills, specifically conflict resolution skills. The paper draws on academic references, including Flanagan's (2009) Critical Play, Mindell's (2002) Deep Democracy, Goleman's (1995) Emotional Intelligence, and Schell's (2020) The Art of Game Design, to support the argument, provide practical examples of how these frameworks have been integrated into experiential learning activities, and look at a case study, "Playshop" (2023), a visioning workshop designed for the OCAD University Digital Futures Undergraduate Program.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Experiential learning is a pedagogical approach that emphasizes learning through hands-on experience, reflection, and feedback (Kolb 1984, p. 38). To enhance the effectiveness of experiential learning, frameworks such as game design, critical play, and systems thinking can be integrated. Game design creates engaging and motivating experiences that structure experiential learning activities to maximize engagement and learning outcomes, creating an immersive and interactive learning environment (Schell 2014, p. 22). Critical play uses games

and play to explore social issues, cultural norms, and power dynamics, developing empathy, perspective-taking, and decision-making skills. Players are encouraged to think critically about the game world, explore different possibilities and perspectives, and question underlying assumptions (Flannagan 2014, p. 3). Systems thinking is a holistic approach to problem-solving, understanding the interconnectedness of systems and the impact of one's actions on the larger whole, helping learners develop a nuanced understanding of complex issues (Mindell 2017, p. 41). This paper explores the benefits of integrating game design, critical play, and systems thinking into experiential learning, focusing on conflict resolution skills. Drawing on the work of Flanagan (2009), Mindell (1995, 2000, 2002), Goleman (1995), and Schell (2015), practical examples of how these frameworks have been integrated into experiential learning activities are provided. One case study is examined: "Playshop" (2023), a visioning workshop designed for the OCAD University Digital Futures Undergraduate Program.

## 2. BACKGROUND

I enrolled in the Digital Futures Undergraduate Program at OCAD University to pursue my passion for game design and development while integrating my artistic practice with my professional work as a life coach, facilitator, and experiential event designer. As a credentialed Professional Certified Coach through the International Coaching Federation, I hold multiple accreditations in various coaching disciplines, including Organization and Relationship Systems Coaching and Deep Democracy Facilitation.

During my time at OCAD, I have also had the opportunity to study human relational systems and design from a participant's perspective through my involvement in academic governance as an elected student representative on the Senate, Board of Governors, and as an Accessibility Representative on the OCAD Student Union Board of Directors. This

extracurricular activity was particularly meaningful to me, as it aligned with my commitment to community service and provided me with valuable insights into organizational change, transition, and global impacts.

In my fourth year of academic study, I focused on my thesis work, which included two projects: "Human Relationship Design: Collaborative Approaches To Inclusive Design & Creative Intervention" (V1.1) and "Co-Design & Creative Coaching: Design Activities To Enable Distributed Teams To Work Better" (V1.2) (2022). Now, in my final year, I am building on my earlier works and delivering an experiential workshop called "DF Playshop 2023" that is a hybrid of both physical in-person and online participants, using a blend of various digital tools to support the work.

### 3. METHODOLOGIES & FRAMEWORKS

Process-Oriented Psychology and Deep Democracy, Systems Thinking, Co-Active Coaching, Emotional Intelligence theory, and Relationship Systems Intelligence (RSI), are approaches that can be used to promote personal and organizational growth. Individuals and organizations can create more productive and fulfilling workplaces by following the natural unfolding of a process that each approach is mindful of, recognizing the interconnectedness of individuals and systems, improving relationships with self and others, and fostering collaboration.

#### 3.1. PROCESS-ORIENTED PSYCHOLOGY & DEEP DEMOCRACY

Process-Oriented Psychology, developed by Arnold Mindell, is a holistic approach that emphasizes the importance of following the natural unfolding of a process rather than imposing preconceived ideas or solutions and exploring the unconscious and creative potential of the psyche. It is based on the idea that every experience, no matter how trivial, has the potential to

reveal important information about the individual and the collective psyche. According to Mindell, process work is a way to access the unconscious and explore the deeper meaning behind conflicts, and it can be particularly useful in organizations where there is a need to uncover hidden dynamics and patterns that may be impeding progress (Mindell, 2000, p. 29). The Leader as Martial Artist: An Introduction to Deep Democracy (2000) provides a comprehensive introduction to the concept of "Deep Democracy," which is a process-oriented approach to group facilitation and conflict resolution. The approach emphasizes the importance of valuing and including diverse perspectives, and encourages participants to explore the unconscious and creative potential of the group. By following the natural flow of the process and exploring the unconscious material that arises in the process, individuals and groups can gain insight into the hidden dynamics that may be impacting their interactions and relationships.

### 3.2. SYSTEMS THINKING

In his book, The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization (1990), author Peter Senge argues that successful organizations are those that can continuously learn and adapt. He proposes the concept of the "learning organization," which is characterized by a culture of lifelong learning, collaboration, and shared vision (Senge, 1990, p. 68-70). Senge defines systems thinking as a way of understanding the complex relationships and feedback loops that exist within and between different parts of a system, and using this understanding to identify leverage points for change (Senge, 1990, p. 68). Senge also presents four other disciplines that are essential for building a learning organization: personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning. Personal mastery involves individuals continually learning and growing, while mental models are the deeply ingrained assumptions and beliefs that shape our behavior. Shared vision involves a collective sense of purpose and direction, while

team learning involves the ability of groups to learn and solve problems together (Senge, 1990, p. 7-12, 130-146, 194-196, 235-242). By embracing the principles of the learning organization and systems thinking, organizations can become more adaptable, resilient, and effective.

### 3.3. CO-ACTIVE COACHING

Co-Active Coaching is an approach to coaching that was developed by The Co-Active Training Institute (CTI), formerly Coaches Training Institute. It emphasizes the co-creative relationship between the coach and the client and is based on the belief that clients are naturally creative, resourceful, and whole. The approach aims to support and empower clients to achieve their goals. The book "Co-Active Coaching: Changing Business, Transforming Lives (2018) provides an overview of the Co-Active Coaching approach and its underlying principles. The fourth edition of the book includes updated information and expanded content, including new chapters on the neuroscience of coaching and the evolution of the Co-Active Coaching model (Kimsey-House & Kimsey-House, 2018, p. 25-28).

The Co-Active Coaching model includes five key principles: Fulfillment, Balance, Process, Insight, and Action. This model is different from traditional coaching approaches because it emphasizes the importance of understanding and working with the whole person, including their emotions, beliefs, and values. It also recognizes the need to balance different aspects of the client's life in order to achieve long-term success. The model emphasizes collaboration and partnership between the coach and the client (Kimsey-House & Kimsey-House, 2018, p. 37-50). Co-Active Coaching can be used to help individuals and teams identify and achieve their goals, and develop a sense of purpose and direction, which can be particularly useful in organizations where people need support in making important decisions

and achieving their full potential as individuals and as an organization (Kimsey-House & Kimsey-House, 2018, p. 23).

### 3.4. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions as well as the emotions of others. In game design, emotional intelligence can be a crucial factor in creating games that are engaging, memorable, and impactful. In his book *Emotional Intelligence* (1995), Daniel Goleman identifies five key components of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Self-awareness involves recognizing one's own emotions, strengths, and weaknesses (Goleman, 1995, p. 43-48). Self-regulation is the ability to manage one's emotions, particularly in stressful situations (Goleman, 1995, p. 49-65). Motivation is the drive to achieve one's goals and persist in the face of setbacks (Goleman, 1995, p. 66-79). Empathy is the ability to understand the emotions of others and respond appropriately (Goleman, 1995, p. 80-99). Social skills involve effective communication, relationship-building, and collaboration (Goleman, 1995, p. 100-122). Goleman emphasizes that emotional intelligence can be developed and improved through practice and feedback, and that it is a critical factor in personal and professional success, particularly in leadership, management, and teamwork (Goleman, 1995, p. 34). By incorporating emotional intelligence into game design, designers can create more immersive and emotionally resonant games that connect with players on a deeper level.

### 3.5. ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP SYSTEMS COACHING (ORSC)

Organizational Relationship Systems Coaching (ORSC) is a coaching methodology developed by CRR Global, a coaching and training organization founded by Marita Fridjhon and Faith Fuller, that focuses on coaching teams and organizations as relationship systems (CRR

Global). ORSC emphasizes the importance of understanding and working with the dynamics of relationships within organizations, as well as the broader systems in which they operate.

Relationship Systems Intelligence (RSI) is a framework designed for leaders, coaches, and facilitators who work with groups and organizations. RSI refers to the ability to understand and work with the dynamics of a group or system, including its patterns, relationships, and energy flows. RSI emphasizes the importance of understanding and working with the dynamics of groups and systems and draws on a variety of disciplines, including the work of Arnold Mindell on process-oriented psychology and deep democracy (Mindell, 1995, 2009); systems thinking (Senge, 1990); emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995); and Co-Active Coaching (Kimsey-House & Kimsey-House, 2018).

Adapting Mindell's work, CRR Global has developed a Deep Democracy tool, which is a framework for working with the complexities of group dynamics and conflict resolution. Deep Democracy emphasizes the importance of listening to and valuing diverse perspectives, including those that may be marginalized or challenging. The approach also involves working with the unconscious or hidden aspects of group dynamics, such as underlying emotions, power dynamics, and cultural influences. Senge's work on systems thinking is another important element in the development of RSI and Deep Democracy (Senge, 1990). Systems thinking is a way of understanding the interconnectedness of various elements within a system and how changes in one element can impact the entire system. Daniel Goleman's work on Emotional intelligence is also relevant to RSI, as it involves the ability to understand and regulate one's own emotions as well as understand and empathize with the emotions of others (Goleman, 1995). Co-Active Coaching, developed by The Co-Active Training Institute (CTI), emphasizes the co-creative relationship between coach and client and the importance of understanding and

working with the deeper dynamics of individuals and relationships within broader systems (Kimsey-House & Kimsey-House, 2018).

The RSI framework identifies five core competencies essential for working with group dynamics: Empathy, Self-Awareness, Responsiveness, Systems Mapping, and Transformation (CRR Global, n.d.). Empathy involves the ability to understand and connect with the experiences and emotions of others, while Self-Awareness refers to the ability to understand one's own emotional reactions and patterns in relationships. Responsiveness involves the ability to adjust and adapt to changing dynamics in a relationship or system. Systems Mapping involves understanding and analyzing the various patterns and relationships within a system. Transformation involves the ability to facilitate positive change within the system. These competencies are described in detail in Relationship Systems Intelligence - Transforming The Face of Leadership (2014) written by CRR Global, which provides an overview of the framework and its practical applications in various settings.

#### 4. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

In the book "Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development" (1984), author David A. Kolb presents his theory of experiential learning, which emphasizes the importance of hands-on experiences and reflection on those experiences in the learning process (Kolb, 1984, p. 38).

Kolb's four-stage experiential learning cycle is a model that describes how individuals learn through experience. According to Kolb, learning is a cyclical process that involves four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984, p. 38).

The first stage of Kolb's experiential learning cycle is concrete experience, which involves the learner actively participating in an experience. This stage is characterized by the learner's engagement in a real-life situation or task. Kolb says this stage is important because it allows the learner to develop a personal connection to the experience (Kolb, 1984, p. 21). The second stage is reflective observation, which involves the learner reflecting on the experience. The learner takes time to observe the experience and process what happened. Kolb says that reflective observation is important because it allows the learner to gain insight into their own personal experience (Kolb, 1984, p. 23). The third stage of Kolb's experiential learning cycle is abstract conceptualization, which involves the learner using reflective observation to form abstract concepts or theories. The learner draws on their personal experience to create new ideas or theories. Kolb states that abstract conceptualization is important because it allows the learner to create their own understanding of the experience (Kolb, 1984, p. 25). The fourth stage of Kolb's experiential learning cycle is active experimentation, which involves the learner testing their theories and ideas in real-world situations. During this stage, the learner takes action to apply their ideas in a new situation. Kolb says that active experimentation is important because it allows the learner to test their ideas and theories in a practical way (Kolb, 1984, p. 27).

Kolb's four-stage experiential learning cycle provides a framework to understand how individuals learn through experience. By engaging in concrete experience, reflecting on the experience, creating abstract concepts and theories, and testing theories through active experimentation, learners gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Kolb, 1984). By understanding this cycle, educators and learners can work together to create effective learning experiences that promote growth and development.

## 5. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING, GAMES & SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Experiential learning and games are closely related, as games can provide a platform for experiential learning. Game design is a natural fit for experiential learning, because both are similarly focused on building skills through hands-on experience and feedback. One widely recognized example might be how game design principles can be applied to experiential learning is the use of levels and challenges to structure learning activities. This approach is commonly used in video games, where players must progress through increasingly difficult levels in order to reach a final goal. In a similar way, learners can be presented with a series of challenges that build upon one another, with each challenge providing feedback and opportunities for reflection and improvement. Game play itself can be seen as a form of experiential learning, because it requires the player to actively engage with the game world and its rules in order to progress.

Games can be designed to provide players with a range of learning opportunities, from developing problem-solving skills to learning new information about a particular topic. Both Flanagan and Schell emphasize the importance of designing games that are engaging and immersive, creating a sense of flow that encourages players to continue playing and learning. By incorporating elements such as challenge, feedback, and narrative, games can provide a powerful platform for experiential learning.

Game design principles can be used to structure experiential learning activities in a way that maximizes engagement and learning outcomes. In the book *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses* (2014), game designer Jesse Schell explores the elements that make games engaging and effective learning tools (Schell 2014, p. 318-319). Schell argues that games should be designed with the player experience and learning outcomes in mind, focusing on factors such

as player motivation, feedback, and narrative (Schell 2014, p. 321-322). Schell suggests that games can be used to teach a wide range of skills and concepts, from basic literacy and numeracy to complex systems thinking (Schell 2014, p. 326). Schell states that games are "an idealized version of reality" which can be used to help learners develop skills through trial-and-error, feedback, and motivation, and argues that games offer players an opportunity to engage with and explore idealized worlds that are different from their own reality, and that this can be an appealing aspect of playing games (Schell 2014, p. 28). Overall, Schell emphasizes the importance of designing games that are both fun and educational, and argues that games can be an effective tool for promoting experiential learning, but only if they are engaging and entertaining for players. Schell asserts that game designers must use multiple lenses, and advocates for a holistic approach to game design, one that takes into account the various elements that make a game enjoyable, including mechanics, story, and aesthetics, in order to create a cohesive and engaging player experience (Schell 2014, p. 17).

In the book *Critical Play: Radical Game Design* (2009), game designer and researcher Mary Flanagan defines critical play as "a mode of thinking about games, a way of looking at games as cultural artifacts and sites for critical thinking and reflection" (Flanagan 2009, p. 5). Flanagan explores the concept of using games as a means of facilitating experiential learning, and states that "Games can be a powerful tool for learning because they create an environment in which the player is an active participant in the experience." (Flanagan 2009, p. 3). According to Flanagan, "By designing experiences that allow players to explore different perspectives, experiment with different strategies, and engage in critical thinking and problem-solving, games can be a powerful tool for experiential learning." (Flanagan 2009, p. 5-6). Flannagan argues that games can help learners to develop a sense of agency and ownership in their own learning by

providing a safe and engaging space for experimentation and exploration (Flanagan 2009, p. 55-56) and that games can be designed to promote collaboration, creativity, and exploration, and by doing so, fosters a sense of agency and ownership in the learning process (Flanagan 2009, p. 111-113).

Critical play (Flanagan, 2009), is a concept that emphasizes the use of games and play for exploring social issues, cultural norms, and power dynamics. It can be used as an approach to help learners develop empathy and perspective-taking skills, which are essential for human skills development, like conflict resolution. As discussed, Mindell (2002) argues that conflict resolution requires "deep democracy," or a willingness to explore different perspectives and understand the underlying dynamics of a conflict. One example of how critical play can be used to develop conflict resolution skills and empathy building is through the use of role-playing games (Flanagan 2009, p. 91-93) and focusing on the emotional experience of the player (Flanagan 2009, p. 142-143). In a role-playing game, learners take on different roles and explore complex issues from multiple perspectives. This approach can help learners develop empathy and understanding for different viewpoints, and can also provide opportunities for practicing communication and negotiation skills. By creating games that challenge players' assumptions and encourage them to consider the perspectives of others, designers can help to promote a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the experiences of others.

Goleman's five components of emotional intelligence (2014) can be applied to game design, in a number of ways. Game designers can use self-awareness to understand how players might feel when they are playing the game. They can then use this knowledge to design the game in a way that is more likely to elicit the desired emotional response from the player. Additionally, game designers can use self-regulation to manage their own emotions during the design process.

This can help ensure that the game is designed in a way that is consistent with the designer's intended emotional tone. Motivation is also an important component of emotional intelligence when it comes to game design. Game designers must be able to motivate players to engage with the game and continue playing it over time. This can be achieved through a variety of techniques, including providing rewards for completing certain tasks, creating a sense of progression or achievement, and using social pressure to encourage players to continue playing. Empathy is another key component of emotional intelligence that can be useful in game design. Empathy allows game designers to understand how players might feel while playing the game and to design the game in a way that is more likely to elicit the desired emotional response. For example, a game designer might use empathy to create a character that players can relate to or to design a game mechanic that elicits a specific emotional response from the player. Finally, social skills are an important component of emotional intelligence that can be useful in game design. Game designers must be able to communicate effectively with players and other members of the game development team. They must also be able to work collaboratively and build relationships with others in order to create a successful game.

Jesse Schell in *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses* (2014), also emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence in game design. He argues that game designers must be able to understand the emotional impact that their games will have on players and must be able to use that knowledge to create a compelling and engaging player experience. Overall, emotional intelligence is an important factor in game design. By using the five components of emotional intelligence identified by Goleman – self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills – game designers can create games that are more engaging, memorable, and impactful. As Schell notes, emotional intelligence is a critical component of successful game

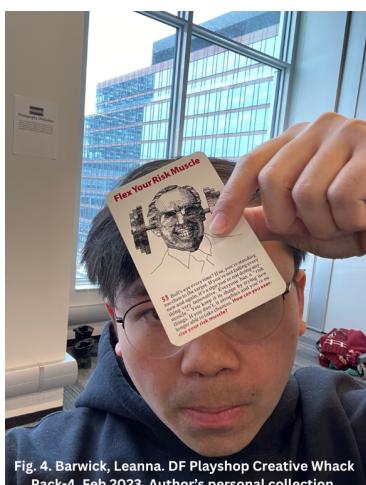
design, and game designers who are able to master it are likely to create games that resonate with players and stand the test of time.

## 6. CASE STUDY: PLAYSHOP

### 6.1. PLAYSHOP: CONTEXT

In February 2023, Leanna Barwick, a Digital Futures Undergraduate student and Relationship Systems Coach, designed Playshop, an experiential day-long learning event that applied game design principles with Relationship Systems Intelligence coaching to do visioning and co-design work. The Playshop was held for the Digital Futures Undergraduate program community,

an inter-hierarchical mix of faculty, students, alumni, and admin, and was co-designed with Dr. Emma Westecott, Digital Futures Undergraduate Program Chair. The focus of the Playshop was on how the Digital Futures Undergraduate Program can articulate OCADU's recent academic strategic plan's goals, specifically Priority #3: "Innovate learning, teaching and research: Improve learning access and outcomes through exchange, innovation, and experimentation". The Playshop framework was designed to support a direct opportunity for the diverse voices of the



DF undergrad community to be heard and prioritize improvement needs and support larger shared goals. The workshop used a hybrid delivery mode, with a mix of in-person and remote participants, and a blend of digital tools, including "Microsoft Teams," "Meeting Owl,"

and a digital slide deck. The Playshop aimed to develop collaborative decision-making techniques that can improve individual interactions throughout group processes and offer new tools to support how one can better respond to change in any relationship.

## 6.2. PLAYSHOP TOOLS & EXERCISES:

### ICEBREAKER

At the beginning of Playshop, an icebreaker exercise using the Creative Whack Pack by Roger von Oech was used to stimulate creative thought and help participants introduce themselves. The exercise involved choosing a card from the deck that resonated with them and sharing it with the group. This activity helped align values and provide raw material for the group's first tool, Designing The Team Alliance. According to Mindell (2002), using games and play for skills training, such as icebreaker games, can help participants get to know each other, build trust, develop listening skills, and empathy for others. (p. 65). (Fig. 1, Fig. 2, Fig. 3, Fig. 4, Fig. 5, Fig. 6, Fig. 7)

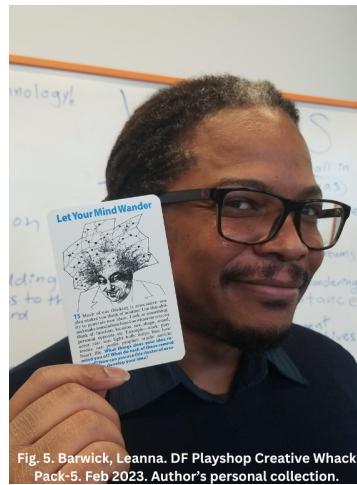


Fig. 5. Barwick, Leanna. DF Playshop Creative Whack Pack-5. Feb 2023. Author's personal collection.



Fig. 6. Barwick, Leanna. DF Playshop Creative Whack Pack-6. Feb 2023. Author's personal collection.

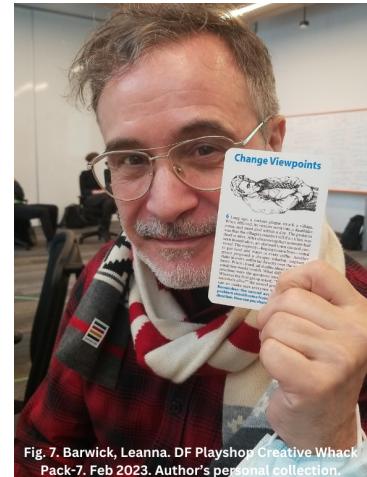


Fig. 7. Barwick, Leanna. DF Playshop Creative Whack Pack-7. Feb 2023. Author's personal collection.

### 6.3. PLAYSHOP TOOLS & EXERCISES: DESIGNING THE ALLIANCE

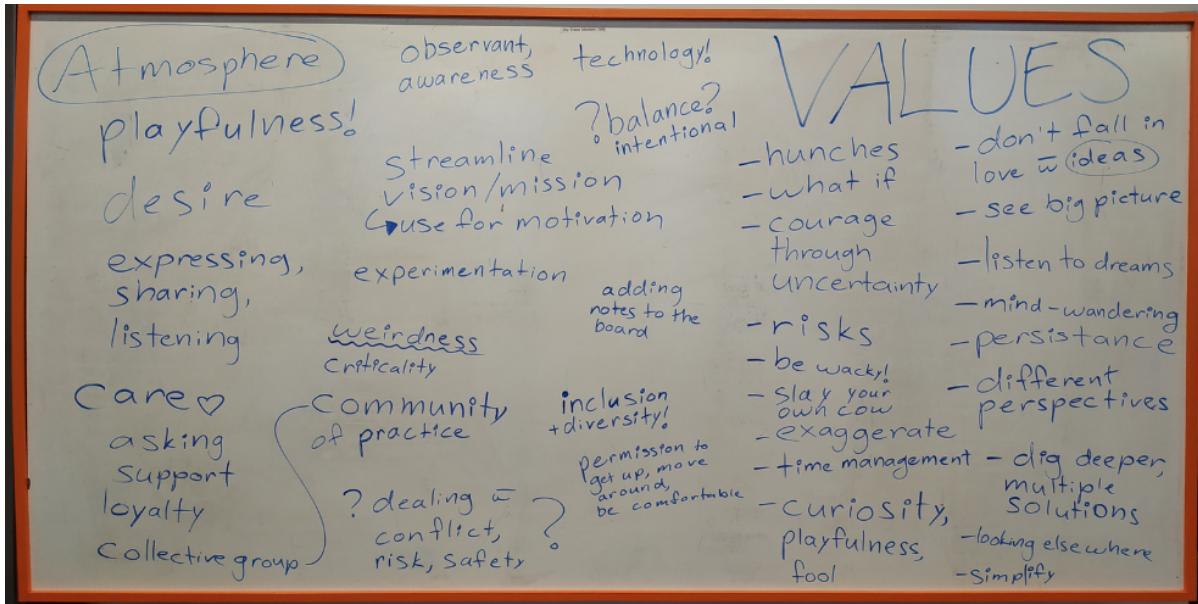


Fig. 8. Barwick, Leanna. DF Playshop Designed Alliance-1. Feb 2023. Author's personal

After introductions, the participants received education on Relationship Systems Intelligence and were trained on the tool called Designing The Team Alliance (DTA) and incorporate the Creative Whack Pack cards they have chosen (Fig. 8, Fig. 9). The DTA helps groups develop a shared understanding of their relationship culture and values. It involves creating a culture or atmosphere, sharing responsibility, and establishing behavioral agreements. During this process, group members focus on their own commitment to the culture they want to create, rather than trying to change others. The DTA creates a foundation for all other work to occur. The coach then weaves the coaching alliance with the DTA to create a Designed Coaching Alliance (DCA). The purpose of the DCA is to identify the team's agenda, create leader/coach

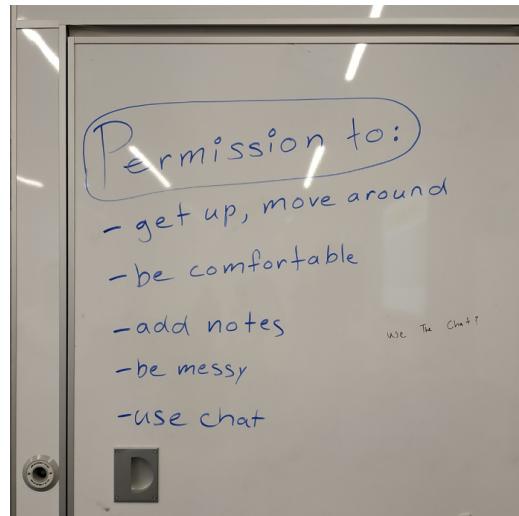
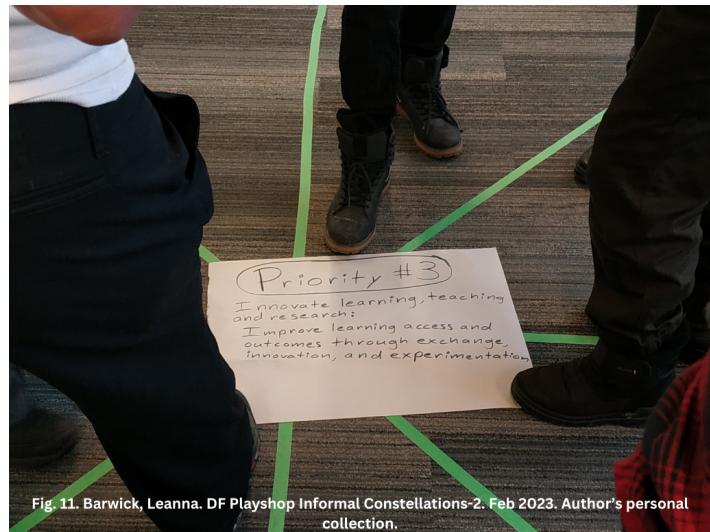
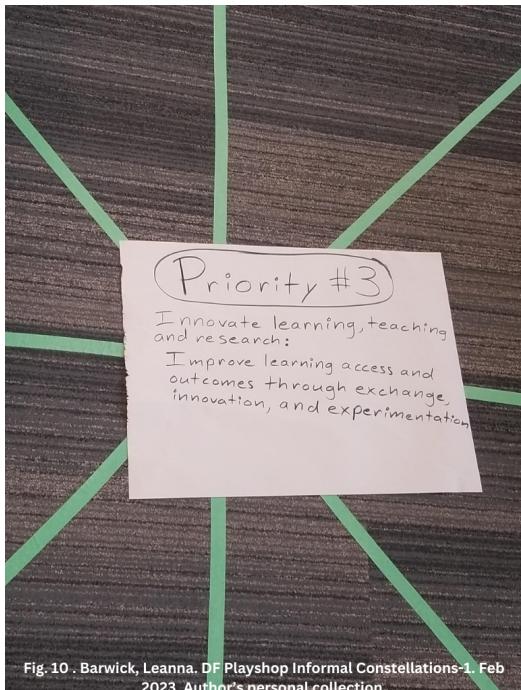


Fig. 9. Barwick, Leanna. DF Playshop Designed Alliance-2. Feb 2023. Author's personal collection.

agreements, define support and expectations of the coaching, and design the scope and duration of coaching. The coach applies facilitation and consulting skills to help the team shape its agenda, but always serves the client's agenda. The DCA includes agreements around information sharing, confidentiality, and outcomes. It is a living agreement that should be reviewed regularly. Both the DTA and DCA are ongoing processes that are held as living agreements that need to be reviewed regularly because change happens, especially when awareness is raised. These tools can be used by teams and partnerships for any upcoming event, such as a family visit or a company move or meeting. The DTA and DCA provide structures that help groups get clear about their agreements and increase their cohesion and alignment.

#### 6.4. PLAYSHOP TOOLS & EXERCISES: INFORMAL CONSTELLATIONS



Playshop participants used a tool called "Informal Constellations," which is a form of "constellation work" that allows a group to organize themselves around a specific issue. It is a rapid way of having a group "vote with their body," and it bypasses words, allowing a nonverbal view of a system's relationship to a topic. Constellations are a key technique used by ORSC coaches to help organizations create sustainable, healthy relationships



Fig. 12. Barwick, Leanna. DF Playshop Informal Constellations-3. Feb 2023. Author's personal collection.



Fig. 13. Barwick, Leanna. DF Playshop Informal Constellations-4. Feb 2023. Author's personal collection.

that promote growth and success. During the exercise, the group is asked establishing, polling, and unfolding questions related to the topic to explore. Participants vote with their bodies by moving closer or farther away from the topic based on their answers. After the exercise, participants have a coaching conversation with a partner to discuss actions or intentions that they can bring to move themselves closer to their last position. This exercise was completed by some light sharing and polling some actions and intentions the group had discovered. (Fig 10, Fig. 11, Fig. 12, Fig 13)

#### 6.5. PLAYSHOP TOOLS & EXERCISES: BRINGING DOWN THE VISION



Fig. 14. Barwick, Leanna. DF Playshop Bringing Down The Vision-1. Feb 2023. Author's personal collection.

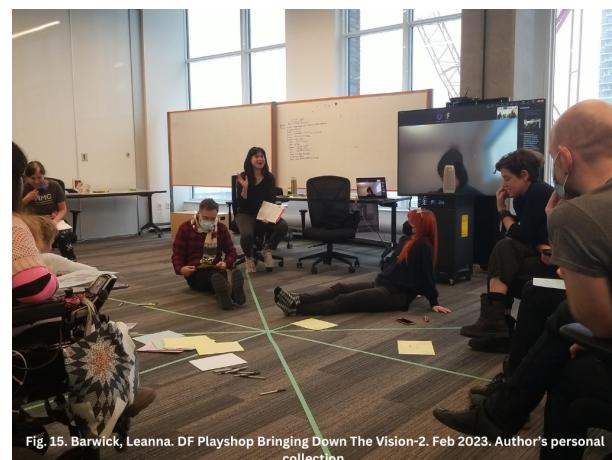
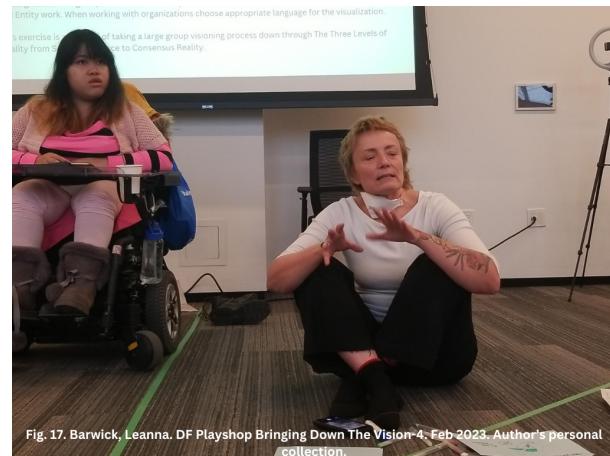


Fig. 15. Barwick, Leanna. DF Playshop Bringing Down The Vision-2. Feb 2023. Author's personal collection.

The Playshop participants utilized a tool called "Bringing Down the Vision" to clarify their shared vision and values and align their actions with these values. The process involves a

series of open-ended questions to define the team's shared vision and values, followed by breaking down the vision into specific action steps. This helps team members to see how their actions contribute to the shared vision, creating a sense of purpose and direction. This tool also fosters trust and collaboration within the team by encouraging members to work together to develop a plan for achieving the vision (Burgess & Ferry, 2013, p. 62). (Fig 14, Fig. 15, Fig. 16, Fig. 17)



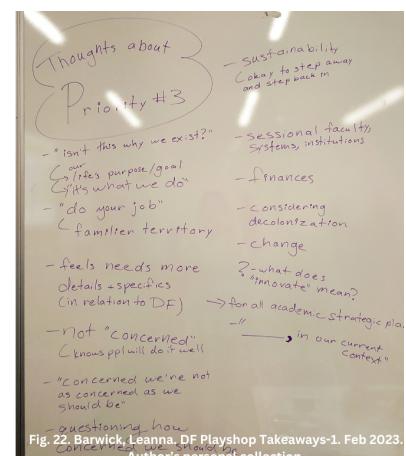
## 6.6. PLAYSHOP TOOLS & EXERCISES: DEBRIEFING

To end Playshop, a simple tool “ELA” used by ORSC coaches to debrief experiential learning activities, was asked of the participants, which involves reflection, analysis, and application of the experience to real-world situations. E: What was that experience like for you? L: What did you learn as a result of that experience? And A:

How will you apply that learning from that experience going forward?

## 6.7. PLAYSHOP: TAKEAWAYS

During DF Playshop, participants generated a list of thoughts on the topic (Fig. 22). , Priority #3 and the Informal Constellation work. Some statements and questions that came up: “isn’t this



why we [as a program] exist? And variations exploring that priority, including that it is the program's and its community driving purpose/goal; “it's what we do”; feels like we're being told to “do your job”. Many members of the Digital Futures community present at Playshop, thought that all of the Academic Strategic Plan priorities need more specific thought in how it relates to them including their current context and beyond what they already do. Some voices were “not concerned” when polled during the Informal constellation exercise, while some also vocalizing that “we're not as concerned as we should be”, and questioning how concerned we should be.

Other questions that got raised in relation to Priority #3, is about sustainability for human energy, and the shared insight and value amongst group members of DF Playshop, that it is ok to step away and step back in (when reflecting on Informal constellations and how the bodies moved in relation to the topic); where do sessional faculty, systems and institutions fit into the priority; and how does the priority consider finances, decolonization, and change. Some participants asked what “innovate” means and are we on the same page about that.

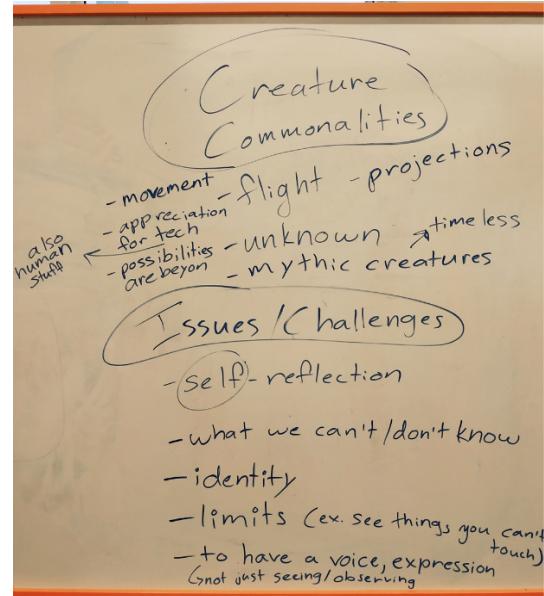


Fig. 23. Barwick, Leanna. DF Playshop Takeaways-2. Feb 2023. Author's personal collection.

Some takeaways from the Bringing Down the Vision exercise (Fig. 23), were based on the metaphors and creatures that the group came up with as representative of the Digital Futures Undergraduate program as an entity. Creature commonalities amongst group members vision for the DF collective entity included: movement, flight, appreciation for technology and “human stuff”, possibilities are beyond what we can imagine, unknown, timeless mythic creatures, and

projections. Commonalities between issues and challenges that the DF entity face: self-reflection, what we can't/or don't know limits us, identity, limits (e.g. sees things but can't touch), to have a voice that is expressed and heard - not just seeing and observing.

## 6.8. PLAYSHOP: NEXT STEPS

The workshop participants discussed several ideas that they would like to keep present and move forward with (Fig. 24), such as synthesizing source material for vision, being intentional, promoting sustainability and resilience, reviewing the curriculum to include "futures" work, and addressing the hole in the classroom outline for teaching to be responsive to student needs. The Digital Futures Undergraduate Committee identified some next steps, including synthesizing the various outcomes from the event and creating a gallery for the collection of Creative Whack Pack cards that represent the groups' values and approaches to creative strategies and their DTA.(Fig 18, Fig 19, Fig. 20)

The Digital Futures Undergraduate Program Committee recognized the value of being together in person and talking about values and ideas, and expressed a desire to take action on some of the ideas generated from Playshop. They also saw the value of the inter-hierarchical nature of the event and speculated that

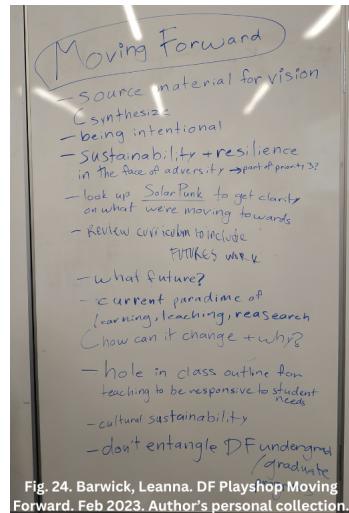


Fig. 24. Barwick, Leanna. DF Playshop Moving Forward. Feb 2023. Author's personal collection.



Fig. 18. Barwick, Leanna. DF Playshop Bringing Down The Vision-5. Feb 2023. Author's personal collection.

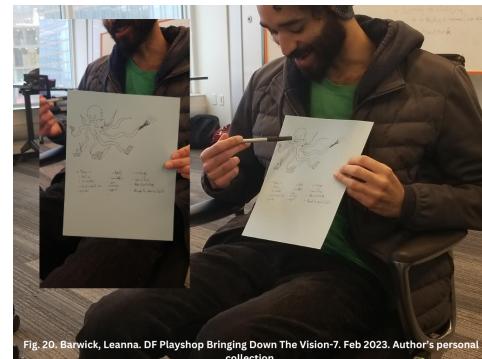


Fig. 20. Barwick, Leanna. DF Playshop Bringing Down The Vision-7. Feb 2023. Author's personal collection.

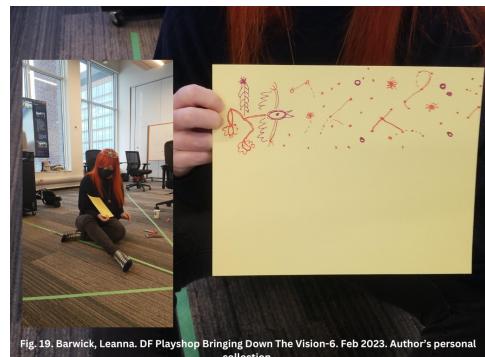


Fig. 19. Barwick, Leanna. DF Playshop Bringing Down The Vision-6. Feb 2023. Author's personal collection.

Playshop could be a model for collaborative events designed by joined teams of faculty and students in the future. In the larger context, Playshop embodies a deep democracy-based philosophy and supports the OCADU Academic Strategic Plan's priority to "centre the student journey and cultivate the personal and professional growth of our students." Through dialogue and collaboration between students, faculty, alumni, and staff, Playshop can support students in fulfilling their potential as people, professionals, and global citizens while recognizing the importance of their voices in shaping the future of the institution.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Experiential learning is a pedagogical approach that emphasizes hands-on experience and reflection. The integration of game design, critical play, and systems thinking can enhance the effectiveness of experiential learning by providing a unique way to learn and practice skills in a safe and engaging environment. This paper demonstrates how the integration of these frameworks can lead to the development of essential skills, specifically conflict resolution skills, like empathy and seeing issues from multiple perspectives. Practical examples have been provided to illustrate how these frameworks have been integrated into experiential learning activities, and the case study, DF Playshop, has been presented to showcase the effectiveness of the approach. The integration of game design, critical play, and systems thinking into experiential learning has the potential to revolutionize the way we approach education and skills development.

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