



opencare

Deliverable 1.8: Deep games documentation

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Overview

Over the course of opencare, SCImPULSE Foundation has run over 100 (103, for the sake of precision) deep gaming sessions, mostly when community events, and in a few opportunities during conferences and forums, reaching out to more than 700 people (728, 52 of whom we met 4 times or more during the life of the project). Deep games have been largely run by exploiting the LEGO Serious Playing method as documented in D1.4. An updated technical documentation is reported below.

The goal of deep games has been to support communities developing their situational awareness, and mapping the DOs and DONTs that would guide their strategic thinking when tackling the challenge of setting up grassroots collaboration to care for their most vulnerable members and to cure the problem afflicting their environments.

A fallback of running these deeply engaging activities with our stakeholders has been the acquisition of wisdom on our part, which has been summarized in D4.5 as an explicit discourse about the social contract of community driven care, and its online design.

D1.6 has also benefitted from the deep games, as stakeholders and partners often found themselves exploring opencare as an example of infrastructural support that would nurture their initiatives. Their process of exploring and learning about the project, informed our reflections on how well we had been doing, and how we could outperform ourselves.

Documentation

Deep games

/open-source

A cross-fertilized Systems Thinking approach derived from educational and innovation research, using the LEGO® Serious Play® methodology enriched with Design thinking and Service Model Generation techniques,

applied for idea co-creation and development of community driven services
but can do much more

Basic Principles and Philosophy

An introduction by Patrizia Bertini adapted by Massimo Mercuri

The concept that creativity is a characteristic of the single individual, today is considered a wrong assumption: much research in recent years focused on the fact that creativity emerges in the interactional dimension, overcoming the traditional view of an isolated creative individual.

Sawyer, Nussbaum and recent studies have proved that creative intelligence is social and it benefits from interaction, learning and cooperation with others. Nussbaum identifies 3 key factors that defines a creative team: trust, familiarity of members and shared commitment for a common goal. But the variables, when it comes to interaction among people, can be wider and more granular, and they can strongly affect the outcome of the collective creative process.

In such a perspective, understanding how creativity works in its social and interactional dimension can open up and reveal a range of new opportunities to exploit individual and collective creativity, to boost innovation, to make disruptive changes and lead to next paradigm shifts.

The goal of Deep Games is to take advantage of the relational dimensions that enhance creative and new ideas to emerge from a group. The intention is to use processes and ways to enhance the spark of creativity within a group of people, so that we can capitalise on the emergent resource of collective creativity.

The flow of group dynamics and facilitated activities are grouped together in a model that allows to establish a deeply intimate playfield for psychological safety that engages collective creativity in a game environment, so that creative intelligence and collective creativity can become an organisational asset.

With that in mind, the Deep Games has the primary goal to apply the proposed flow of activities & group exercises in the OpenCare project for community service design, and as a secondary goal to collect valuable experience from those activities for future upcoming studies in education and learning.

Methodologies

We have chosen LEGO Serious Play (LSP) as the methodology for the Deep Games laboratory. The intent of Deep Games is to amplify the creativity potential of the people that have proposed new ideas about medical and social care with an open and/or community approach. The Scimpulse Foundation is certified in the facilitation of LSP and has several years of experience in group dynamics, with access to a wide network of certified LSP facilitators worldwide.

The Deep Games workshops are meant to support communities at any stage of the lifecycle of a grassroots care initiative.

The storyline and challenges will be geared towards exploration and teambuilding, leveraging the effectiveness of gaming in breaking down hierarchical barriers, and in shifting discourse from knowledge to experience, in the case of budding initiatives. It will be geared towards scenario simulation, reflection, and sense making, in the case of initiatives that have already had the first instances of crisis and pivoting.

The proposed research to be performed after the Deep Games workshop events, adopts an ethnographic approach and focuses on identifying the role of accountability in the discourse about community led care, and ownership in its sustainability.

A special place in the flow of deep games is devoted to the mid-term workshops. These have been conceived as moments of reality check and reflection for the organizers, who meet in real life groups, and their projects, that have been especially active in the online discourse on the platform, and have been selected for their adherence to the definition of “open care” as elaborated with Ezio Manzini¹. This experience is radically different from meeting communities that fully live in shared environments and regularly meet, and is a unique opportunity to reflect on the mapping of sense across the on- and off-line discourse.

These workshops work as training and care process of their own for the participants by allowing a joint metaphoric representation of the topic, while allowing the participants to challenge their views against people who have gone through similar experiences before, or who have knowledge relevant to their perceived needs. The goal is not to offer answers, but to hone the questions.

The participants exchange knowledge between each other by playing with the models in the fashion similar to a “strategy game”. That becomes the “prototype” to test the hypotheses and assumptions of the group. By stressing the prototype scenario in a game environment

¹ https://playbook.opencare.cc/ezio_manzini_about_opencare_project.html

the players are learning how to deal with the diverse aspects, circumstances and variables related to the theme proposed. The game setting provides the psychological safety to experiment without consequences, allowing the participants to openly co-create without limitations.

Participants will be then asked to interact using online social applications (such as the Edgeryders' platform) to document their conversations and to extend access to their reflection beyond the scopes they themselves envisioned. Each selected proposal initiative will engage in further coaching and prototyping facilitated by the project partners and their network of expertise, depending on the area or field impacted by each proposal. (examples are if a device needs to be prototyped, in case of designing a service or a new business model)

Emphasis at all stages is on the interaction among individuals: from the kind of interaction, quality, quantity, media used etc... insights will be extract by the team to perform qualitative and quantitative reflections, to inform further developments in the facilitation.

Process facilitation

Scimpulse is part of a network of certified facilitators for the LSP method, assuring there will be a certified facilitator available for each group and event.

Note that one workshop group requires one facilitator. It is not possible to facilitate two groups 'side by side' (for example, two tables, each with eight participants, in the same room) because each group would need focused attention from the facilitator, at the same time – so this is not possible.

The facilitator's task is to get the group's dialogue to serve its purpose and make the participants capable of expressing the reflections and ideas that are needed for the group to reach their goal (for example, to resolve their issue, to plan their strategy, or to implement company values). The role of the facilitator is, therefore, to make the reflection and dialogue processes easier.

With the purpose of reaping most benefit from the process, the two most important things to keep in mind are:

- The purpose of the workshop process is to make way for constructive reflection and dialogue for the system to gain insight and find their own answers (the system being the group of individuals and their relations to each other). This implies a focus on open-ended building game challenges and facilitating questions as well as on the reflection and dialogue as a goal in itself.
- The concept provides a tool that should be utilized to its full potential. That tool is the LEGO models and their being physically present representations of people's thoughts, reflections, ideas, opinions, hopes, dreams, fears, and narratives. Using its full potential means exploiting the presence of the physical models as psychological proxies, fully engaging with them in a game and the meanings that they contain.

So combined with the basic value that ‘the answer is in the system’, the facilitator’s main task is to help the participants express themselves, listen to each other, and take each others’ reflections into account. The facilitator’s goal when using the method should not be to drive the group to a certain conclusion, or a certain decision or opinion.

Reflection and Dialogue

The process is focused on the participants’ reflections and dialogue. The facilitator’s job is to help participants reflect and express themselves via the models they build during the process.

The facilitator can best achieve this by demonstrating curiosity and showing an interest in the model the individual participant has built and the story they tell about it. The facilitator does this by asking questions that encourage the participant to dig deeper into the meaning of their model and the story attached to it.

Participants gain more insight through their own reflection and dialogue. The most efficient tool in the process is to ask questions and show genuine interest in taking a deeper look into the thoughts, feelings and ideas conveyed through the models and their assigned stories. Even though the facilitator must take this neutral position in the process, the facilitator still has a powerful way of influencing the process through the questions they pose. Good facilitating questions are an effective way of influencing the process.

Externalization

The term ‘externalizing’ describes how the thoughts participants share during the process are distanced from the person because they are built as models. The participants’ thoughts are expressed in a way that makes it easy for participants to explore as a group what has been expressed individually. Externalizing individual reflections in this way distances them from the individual, making it easier to explore the reflections without challenging the person who expressed them.

At the same time, the models (as physical representations) help anchor what has been said during the process, which makes dialogue and subsequent reflection flow better from the individual and from the group. If a discussion has gone off on a tangent, externalization provides the perfect method for getting it back on track, by leading the discussion back to the physical models in front of the participants and what they can ‘read’ from them.

With the models, externalization is integrated into the method as a familiar and effective means by which to express participants’ reflections. The facilitator must maintain focus on the models, consistently using them as tools as participants explore their own and each others’ reflections. The facilitator’s questions must consistently relate to models built during the process—and they must encourage participants to do the same.

Recording and documenting in real time

Each workshop requires one recording device for the audio and the presence of a person who acts as the “scribe”, “photographer” and manage the logistics around the workshop.

At each stage, as is always the case in LSP workshops, the participants build, and then share the ‘story’ of what they have built with each other.

The scribe plays a very important role. He/she needs to be already familiar with basic Design Thinking tools like the User’s Point of View (PoV) quadrant, the What-how-why chart and the Prototype Evaluation quadrant among others. This extraction can be done in real time based on what the players are saying during some specific workshop activities. The latter is to be discussed and decided “per event” basis to contribute to the project as a whole.

Letting the brain reflect during the workshop is vital for creativity to recharge. Moreover, going through the script can take one full day, and participants are likely to become tired – this kind of play is hard work. Make sure that pleasant breaks, and a nice lunch, are scheduled. Do not provide too much distraction, or try to reduce external distraction to a minimum. With large groups (7-11 players) plan for up to two days, or better split in two groups. Can also be one afternoon/evening and one morning, and even allows better “reflection time” for the brain of the participants, overnight.

The breaks and pauses also serve as opportunity to attend the logistics of the workshops to prepare for the next following exercises.

Intended audience

The workshop is intended to amplify the original topic of conversation, into a game of “what if”. The group uses models with metaphoric identity to prototype (and stress) a scenario that emerges from the collective intelligence of the group.

For the above statement to be true, it is important to enrich the group’s knowledge by inserting players with skills or experiences that relate to the core concept or topic. Equally advisable is to have one or two players from a completely disconnected knowledge background or field of activity (example: fishermen and insurance sales agents; gardeners and boardroom members, et similia). In each case the players need to be carefully selected.

Participant composition (Players)

For a workshop with the potential of co-creation, amplified by collective creativity and teaming training we need an “assortment” of profiles:

- The person who entered the selected contributions in the participatory call.
- Up to two players from OpenCare Partners
- Added players from two possible categories for thinking about the system:

- Representing potential close-distance agents in the value chain.
- Representing external agents at different degrees of dependency.
- A screwball, coming from a very distant field.

The result is simply all very different players.

To provide an example, think about dealing with the topic of “Can heart attack emergencies and first aid dealt with the personnel working in a community care center”:

- Community Care Center provider
- Community Care Center user
- Nurse or paramedic, knowledge of the topic.
- Doctor, broader knowledge of the theme.
- Insurance agent, related to topic.
- Legislator, next degree of relationship.
- Theoretical physicist, the screwball.

There are other possible formation. As an example: a workshop that aims at organizations may follow a complete different selection criteria, like having the representative of each community subgroup, such as neighborhoods in cities. Any analogy to a system is valid, then add the screwball.