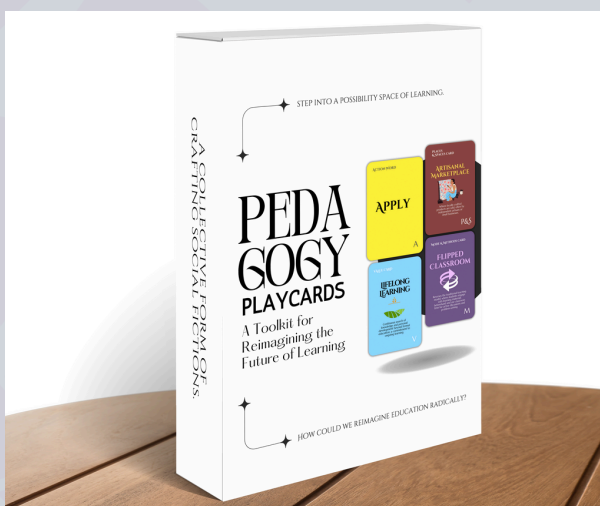


Imagining pedagogical opportunities A playful experimentation

KID: 20240315

This ongoing work introduces a card-based speculative tool designed to explore alternative futures in higher education. In the context of accelerating global challenges, there is a critical need to re/imagine new learning frameworks that move beyond incremental reforms in education. The tool operates as a mechanism to generate futures, meaning that futures require what yet to exist.

By assembling combinations of places, values, actions, and modes, supported by prompts, participants construct possibility spaces where the educational status quo can be questioned and reconfigured. These speculative scenarios surface tensions, aspirations, and uncertainties of multiple pedagogical possibilities.

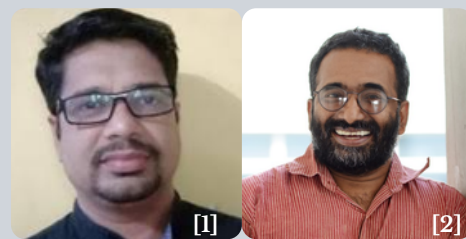


Design as Inquiry

This approach situates design as inquiry, where imagining alternative futures is not a thought exercise but a method for critical reflection and narrative construction. The tool aims to provoke discourse on what education could become, challenging the assumptions embedded in existing structures. Through the continuous interplay of speculation and iteration, it invites participants to engage with the complex politics of learning, agency, and equity. Objective of this interactive card-based tool is to provoke imagination and dialogue on future models of higher education and encourage participants to craft social fictions. The attempt is to combine research insights with extrapolative scenarios to spark playful and critical exchanges. It is expected that the outcome will act as a precursor to scenario building. Games function as social systems, simultaneously representing reality and constructing social structures. This concept draws on Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* (1938), which frames humans as inherently playful beings.

Elements of the Tool

The tool comprises five key elements, each contributing to the construction of speculative educational scenarios.



By combining these elements on a drafting template, participants generate draft narratives that explore alternative futures.

Action Words: A set of action verbs serves as prompts, encouraging users to define dynamic interactions within their scenarios.

Value Cards: Each of the 24 value cards represents a distinct educational values and of orientations. Users can also create custom cards to reflect emerging values.

Modes and Method Cards: This deck illustrates diverse approaches and techniques for delivering learning experiences.

Place and Space Card: The deck of physical and imagined spaces where learning might occur, including public venues and speculative environments. Users can extend the list by inventing new, context-specific spaces.

Prompts: Participants are invited to create concise, vivid descriptions of future learning environments, translating speculative ideas into actionable visions.

Draft Scenario: By combining tool elements, participants construct speculative futures

The Thing of the Future is an optional element that accommodates technological futuring in learning. Users can create imaginary artifacts or propose new uses for existing objects, expanding the material possibilities.

Execution and initial reflections

Card play operates at the intersection of freedom and order, where moments of spontaneity coexist with underlying structure. Nineteen students and three teachers played the first rough draft of the game in Delhi. Later, multiple situations, contexts and age-groups were used. The card numbers have changed several times. Despite its unstructured appearance, the game follows an internal logic, with implicit rules guiding play and sparking imaginative ideas.

The exercise has given rise to themes of anti-disciplinary knowledge clusters, quantum pedagogy, and Failure-Based Learning Models (FBL), among others. These concepts reveal new design-based directions in education. They remain inaccessible when educational research stays rooted in the present. Initial drafts were often humorous, but repeated iterations revealed increasingly imaginative and meaningful outcomes.

The future exists first in imagination, then in will, then in reality, says Barbara M Hubbard, Futurist and author. It is learnt that a suspension of disbelief is essential for participants to engage fully with speculative combinations and push the boundaries of what learning could become.

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