

Summary of discussions, notes & surveys from

Playing together at a distance

An online conference to explore open-ended online experiences to counter social isolation

Version 1.0

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This document includes summaries and qualitative data gathered from the Playing Together at a Distance bootcamp online conference, hosted by the Interacting Minds Centre at Aarhus University on January 25 & 26, 2021. The conference was designed by Amos Blanton, Ella Paldam and the PLAYTrack Research Group with help and facilitation from Ryan Jenkins, Mike Petrich, Mariana Tamashiro, Sebastian Martin, Ryoko Matsumoto, and Carmelo Presicce. The idea for this document was developed with help from Associate Professor Mette Terp Høybye from the IMC, AU.

Within this document you will find three layers of information: i) overall summaries and takeaways, ii) summaries of each of the different strands of data, and iii) the raw data itself in the form of surveys, notes, padlets, and weused.to statements. We included all 3 layers of our analysis to give you the opportunity to look through whatever you find to be relevant. We've added links between the summaries and the raw data to give you a chance to follow our train of thought.

Our initial interpretations

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Ellas' summary & takeaways

The PTaaD event was part of a series of one-day conferences called '[Bootcamps](#)' organized within the [PLAYTrack Project](#) at [the Interacting Minds Centre](#), AU. Since 2016, the research group has organized 12 intense one-day events dedicated to methodological issues targeted play researchers and specialists. Recently in the research group, we have been discussing the therapeutic aspects of play from the different perspectives of our projects. This gave rise to the idea of a bootcamp on the topic of 'healing play'.

The bootcamp was planned to take place in 2020. But as the year progressed and COVID-19 closed down the world, we were faced with the decision to either cancel, postpone, or move the event online. Concurrently, we noticed in the media a growing concern among parents, professionals, and researchers about the impact of school lockdowns on children's social lives and mental health.

When schools closed down, we began experimenting with ways to play together using video conferencing apps. We equipped our own kids with phones and tablets and asked them to play together. Initially, we thought of it as 'play portals'. At first, our kids seemed to enjoy experimenting with the new interface. But they soon became frustrated with the lack of opportunities to share through other communicative means than direct verbal language. Their friendship patterns seemed to change and there was less room for imagination and explorative play.

At school, my 7-year old used to spend all his free time building fantasy universes for adventuring figurines (old bottle caps) using mud, sticks, and rocks together with 5-7 peers. This game had carried over from kindergarten, where my son and his best buddy would spend their days wrapped up in the co-construction of elaborate bottle-cap adventures. When schools closed down and turned their everyday lives upside-down, we sent them out into the yard thinking that phones would let them continue their adventures together at a distance. But they soon lost interest. My son began choosing those of his friends who were good at playing online games instead.

This made me realize that for my son and his best

buddy, their way of interacting would never translate into a video conferencing app. Direct verbal language simply wasn't their preferred mode of communication. This observation resonated with the analyses I was running from my home office of collaborations between children and adults. In the data, I observed that when direct verbal language was the main mode of communication, children tended to become detached from the collaborative process.

Amos and I continued to explore how we could improve the possibilities for open-ended play in video conferencing apps, and we realized that our explorations linked up to the topic of 'healing play'. After all, it seems like online play is an obvious way to counter social isolation and loneliness. This led to the decision to organize our healing play bootcamp as an online event. This meant that the topic of the bootcamp changed from 'healing play' to 'playing together at a distance'. Perhaps this would be an opportunity to develop new ideas that could help counter social isolation during the lockdown. Moreover, these ideas could potentially support the social lives of children who are chronically socially isolated due to medical or developmental conditions.

I summarize this backstory of PTaaD to provide a framework for my takeaways from the event. I was particularly interested in two aspects of the conference: 1) Would we be able to co-construct relevant interdisciplinary knowledge about how to support the social lives of children online? 2) Could we create an online environment that invited other communication strategies than direct verbal language? I feel like I am still only slowly chewing through all the new food for thought that emerged. Below I list five observations that have taken up my mind space since.

#1 Social interaction in play: The observation that we were '[playing in parallel](#)' more than '[playing together](#)' emerged as a main point during the reflection. It corresponds with my own experience. This made me think that we haven't yet found a solution to the problem of playing together online. But it also made me think that social interaction in play takes many forms. In the literature on autistic children's play, parallel play is often denigrated as a non-social

form of play. Yet during PTaaD, [a sense of community](#) and [a 'social feel'](#) emerged from our parallel play. This makes me think that when we aim to support children's social development, perhaps we should place more value in parallel play?

#2 Sound: We asked participants to leave on their mics during the activities. This gave us access to an aspect of each other's process that is usually deliberately barred in video conferences. Several participants highlighted this particular element as something that made them [feel more connected to the others](#). Yet, some also mentioned that taking the sound space to ask a question or contribute a comment felt like ['monopolizing the social space'](#). This makes me think that an open sound space is a double edged sword online: It connects us that I can hear your process, but it also feels intimidating to be able to take up the sound space between us.

#3 Heads & hands: One of our aims with PTaaD was that new knowledge would grow from our many hands rather than pour out from a few talking heads. Although many participants mention that they were able to [take inspiration from seeing other people's process](#), several also mention that [inspiration comes easier when you tinker together in real life](#). Still, most participants seem to appreciate that our attention was not focused on faces. I am curious to explore further how it contributes to establishing a sense of community to see that others are touching the same kind of materials with their hands.

#4 Time & place: Somehow, I expected that an online event would be very efficient when it comes to time and place. In the feedback, several participants note that [time seemed to pass quickly](#) during the activities. Others point out how nice it was to be able to play with [people who were located in different countries](#). Yet, time was also a challenge in organizing synchronous activities because participants were located across 18 time zones. Moreover, as we planned the content of the plenary introduction sessions, we realized that information about the logistics of being together online took up a surprisingly large chunk of time compared with real life events where logistics tend to be given by the location.

#5 Co-constructing knowledge: In organizing the event, we discussed how we have both previously experienced first-hand the paradoxical feeling of auditorium-style lecturing about constructionist approaches to learning. To try something different, we aimed at limiting the synchronous time spent on passive listening. This also meant that [we did not define specific takeaways](#) or key theoretical points. Rather, we aimed at sparking reflection and new questions. It seemed like participants were engaged in the shared reflections, and that they [generally appreciated the constructionist approach](#). Yet, I wonder whether we found [the right balance between hands on activities and shared reflections](#). Moreover, I am curious as to whether this kind of event entails a different and perhaps [longer epistemological process?](#)

Amos' summary & takeaways

In the reflection sessions, several people observed that because the activities were not about creating a single collaborative project together, their experience resembled [parallel play](#) more than collaborative play. Parallel play is when children are near one another but don't try to influence each other with ideas or actions. Kids who have just met will often begin with parallel play and then slowly transition into collaborative play. **Can designing for parallel play be a good strategy for preparing online learners to shift to collaborative play?** One reflection group posed the question slightly differently: "How do we let people transition between different modes of togetherness -- i.e. between parallel and collaborative play?"

Several participants reported that they felt somewhat isolated during one or more of the activities, and got stuck without knowing how to ask for help. But there remained a sense of communication or connection to the rest of the group - more than there would have been if they were tinkering entirely on their own. Participants described one of the strategies that facilitators used to maintain this sense of connection as [ambient updates](#). Ambient updates are when the facilitator asks various participants to share what they are doing, but without demanding the full (or even very much) attention from the rest of the participants. It's a bit like a radio show or podcast playing in the background. The use of [music in the background](#) was another intervention that several people remarked helped set a casual tone, lowering the stakes and making participants feel more comfortable.

Another strategy that was remarked upon was sending ["kits" of materials](#) (the purple envelopes - which only [76.2% of participants](#) of participants received in time, sadly, due to a rather disappointing performance by PostNord). It felt nice to be sharing candy together even though we were far apart. Receiving something in the mail - even if it's just a bit of wood and wire and candy - appears to be exciting. A few participants mentioned that they've experimented with this in another context and reported that personalization of the mailed kit with handwritten notes etc. seemed to make this effect stronger.

One wonders how a kit could work if participants were asked to work on their project both on their own (asynchronously) and online at the same time together (synchronously).

Each of the above are examples of practices designed to create the conditions for invention in online play experiences. **The sharing of images and ideas through padlets** is one that serves to spread the different ideas that emerge from each individual's tinkering process around the group as a whole, enabling contagious inspiration and improving the conditions for collective creativity. In some ways the padlet, online, takes on the role that the shared work table serves in an in-person workshop: a display of works in progress / different ideas taking shape. One of the ways in which they differ is that a participant can look around the work table whenever they want, but the padlet only shows what each participant has selected to share. This difference in initiative may or may not turn out to be significant.

Exposing participants to each other's ideas is an important aspect of open-ended play activity design, and there are many strategies for doing this in in-person workshops. For example, in a tinkering activity called [Art Machines](#), in which participants invent drawing machines with motors and batteries, facilitators can set out paper on a separate table and invite participants to bring their drawing machine to it from time to time to contribute to a collective drawing. This is one example of a **"watering hole"** - a space designed to facilitate encounters between participants and their ideas in a playful and informal way.

But contagious inspiration is somewhat limited in online tinkering experiences for the simple reason that it's difficult to look up and see what others are working on - something which is easily done in in-person play. **What other kinds of "watering holes" could be created to enable cross-pollination of ideas in online play experiences?**

During the conference, several of you had your children join in for the activities - a welcome side effect of being homebound together. We heard reports

that it was engaging for all concerned, and seemed to change the quality of the room from which people joined the video call. Prior to hearing this, I had always imagined online play experiences to consist of a facilitator and many individuals, each connecting via their own computer. But this suggests that having each end of the video call be **a local “pod” of 2 or more people** might yield interesting results. For one thing, it could probably reduce the risk of a single participant getting stuck without anyone noticing or offering to help them. This would address one of the weaknesses we observed about online play experiences: It’s much more difficult for a facilitator to notice when someone on the other end of a video call is stuck or getting too frustrated. But an in person “pod,” consisting of multiple people, could be primed to be aware of the emotional state of its own members, offer help, and reach out to the online facilitator when needed. “Podmates” are in a better position to notice new or innovative ideas emerging from the work of their members, and to encourage one another to present them to the rest of the online group.

When it comes to playful online learning experiences, we are used to thinking of 2 primary roles: facilitator and learner. But we could imagine a 3rd role in the form of a “local facilitator” (perhaps, but not necessarily, a parent could take this role). **How do we divide tasks and responsibilities between remote and local facilitators for creating the conditions for invention?** What things are better done locally, and what can be handled well enough remotely?

Each of these observations represent promising ‘adjacent possibles’ that emerged out of our process of play and reflection. The concept of the adjacent

possible is nearly as simple as it sounds: an idea or interpretation that’s one step away from where we are now, in the same way that the post-it note is one step away from a piece of paper and a bit of tape. The process of innovation involves exploring the space of adjacent possibles, trying out those that seem promising and then exploring the adjacent possible around them, etc. etc. In this view, innovation is path-dependent bricolage, a stringing together of adjacent possibles that eventually takes you somewhere new.

Most adjacent possibles don’t lead anywhere interesting, but some do. What we call a breakthrough is when a new idea or action on the trail of adjacent possibles demonstrates value, thereby retroactively validating each of the exploratory adjacent possibles that preceded it. There’s no guarantee that any of the ideas that emerged from our small conference will be part of a later breakthrough’s antecedent adjacent possibles. But I will revisit this document annually to see if any of the ideas we identified together proves to be a stepping-stone between where we are today, and where we end up in the future. One of our reasons for sharing our analysis with all of you, the participants, is the hope that one or more of these adjacent possibles can be a foundation for your further explorations in playing together at a distance, and perhaps lead to new and useful insights. That would form a nice example of collective creativity through the exploration of the adjacent possible.

We thank each of you for joining us for this shared experience and for contributing your time and reflections to our collective exploration. Please keep in touch and share back any thoughts you have that develop in the course of time.

Summary of final reflection...

This document summarizes the content of the shared padlet and the group google docs from the final reflections session. The notes of the groups have been summarized using five headings and a number of concepts by Amos and Ella. Please find the [Padlet](#) and the [Google Docs](#) in the appendix, or navigate back to [Amos' takeaways](#) and [Ella's takeaways](#). We hope that you will find inspiration in our summary of your reflections...

...on 'playing'

Several groups mention the thought of identifying 'patterns of play'; yet, when we go through the documentation, we notice that reflections on the playful qualities of the experience are surprisingly absent. Perhaps we would have reflected more on the play itself if we had explored more different types of play.

Supporting choice online: Agency and choice is core to open-ended play. Yet, it is difficult to exert and express personal choices and actions in a zoom feed. How could we have supported each participant's agency in the activities better?

The purple kits: Receiving the envelope made participants feel part of a larger group. The candies provided an opportunity for a shared experience during the break. The kits tied people together even though they were spread out across the world. But did the 25% who had not received the kits feel excluded?

...on 'culture'

Process or product? The facilitators emphasized the iterative nature of the process and the importance of making mistakes. Yet, the activities ended with a 'show & tell'-style reflection. How would it work if we had asked participants to share a realization, mistake, or discovery that they had noticed instead?

The whole world in my home office: A major advantage of the online format was that people from different organizations all over the world could participate easily. Moreover, they were in the comfort of their own homes which made it possible to use personal tools and materials. Yet, time zone logistics was difficult, and the timing was inconvenient for some participants.

More than one way to engage: How would interaction dynamics have changed in the activities if people had the opportunity to be 'a fly on the wall'? Would a couple of observers with more time to document have made a difference in the shared reflection? Would everybody have remained within their normal comfort zone rather than trying something new? And would that have been a problem?

SoMe-like sharing tools: The tools for sharing reminded some groups of social media. Would it be possible to share in a more personal way? If the spaces for sharing had been less 'glossy', perhaps it would have been easier to share our mistakes.

Establishing community: Some groups noticed that people tended to be more quiet at first. If we structured the activities to stay quiet and focused on making and only later add the discussion element, would that create more equity between those who knew each other in advance and those that didn't?

...on 'together at a distance'

Did we succeed in playing together during the event? Several groups note that there was very little collaboration. Even though collaborative moments did occur, we mostly played in parallel. Yet, most groups also mention that they felt that they were together with others despite the lack of direct interaction.

Hanging out online: We see a general appreciation of being able to hang out with others during the event. Passive sociality focused on a shared third activity seems to hold recreational qualities. Could we use this insight to counter social isolation?

'Hot mics' & 'ambient updates': We asked you to keep your microphones on during the activities. This audio access to each other's workspaces strengthened the experience of being together. In particular, listening to interactions between facilitators and other participants worked as 'ambient updates' that helped extend and deepen the exploration of the materials.

...on 'learning'

Learning from social observation: When the webcams filmed the hands during the activities, participants were able to learn from each other's process and from following the facilitators. Even though in theory it should be easy to ask about the actions of others, in practice most of the interaction happened between facilitators and individual participants.

Group learners? Participants had very different prerequisites for engaging in the activities. For some, 'the ceiling' wasn't high enough, and for others, 'the floor' wasn't low enough. Yet, it was difficult for participants to support each other's learning. How can we better scaffold group learning by noticing & supporting different learning styles and zones of proximal development?

Desireable frustration: Frustration was an important part of the experience. Some got stuck, and many were able to find a route through their frustration. How could we create an online environment that better supports learners in their frustration?

Intro vs. long-run learning: Activity design and facilitation strategies may vary considerably if the activities were part of a longer learning process where learners had the opportunity to build their experience and their own learning trajectories.

Music in the background: The music in the introduction to the Shadow Remixes activity created a welcoming atmosphere that supported focus and groundedness in the zoom room.

a couple of new ideas

Playing with perception: Online presence relies on vision and hearing. Could we activate other senses as well? What would happen if we asked people to create a horrible smell?

Change of scenery: Could we ask participants to change their contexts? What would happen if we told everybody to go outside with their computers? Or into a room with different acoustics, e.g. the bathroom?

Icebreakers: Use playful icebreakers to create community in the plenaries and breakout rooms.

Summary of ptaad.weused.to ([go to data](#))

The WeUsedTo statements were on the topics of facilitation, informal physical / digital play in home work-space, and the feeling of social connectedness in play experiences mediated through video calls. The general emotional tenor of responses suggests participants were “pleasantly surprised” to find that the experience of playing together online was more engaging than they had initially imagined.

There is no evidence of any statements being formed in reaction or reflective response to having seen another statement. We don't have data to indicate if people did or did not look at other people's statements, and if doing so facilitated or inspired their own reflections. This is a methodological weakness of our experiment with WeUsedTo and a challenge to try to solve in future ones.

The statements were all positive about the conference. This of course has to be taken with a few grains or of salt, since many respondents know or are friends with the organizers.

Here are a few statements. You can see all the statements in the data below ([go to data](#)).

I used to think that playing at a distance would be very difficult and impossible to have all the playful learning characteristics.

Now I can see that it is possible and fun. Also, we can use anything around the house to make anything. That is the beauty about play IMAGINATION!

date: Mon Jan 25 2021 20:03:09 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Lerato, location: South Africa

I used to knit during all zoom meetings to stay focused.

Now I am totally behind on knitting but full of great ideas.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:58:44 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Linda, location: Aarhus

I used to think we were miles apart.

Now I think you are here even though I'm not looking at my screen.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:57:13 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Anne, location: Denmark

I used to think that the creative aspect of research was enough for me.

Now I realize that I miss this other kind of creativity which is not goal oriented. I will think of how I can use this to connect socially with my friends.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:57:20 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Ingela, location: Stockholm

I used to think that when I was working at home on something online it would feel private

Now I think it feels public both in positive and unsettling ways.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:56:21 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Mara, location: Boston, USA

I used to discuss the possibilities with people who could not see these possibilities.

Now I have a bunch of people who also know it is possible.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:55:36 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Klaus, location: Aarhus

Summary of Micro Survey 1

Below we list ten quotes from Micro Survey 1 that summarize the 29 responses we received in the time inbetween the online workshops on Monday and Tuesday. Links to the data in the appendix makes it possible to see the quotes in their context.

“Was nice to play in my own home - with more people than would normally fit.” ([go to data](#))

“This made me wonder about how playing at a distance could potentially also involve bringing in others in your family or household, and what affordances that could have...” ([go to data](#))

“The transition between being playfully together and finding yourself alone in front of a screen when the workshop is over is very abrupt, it only takes one click.” ([go to data](#))

“[It was] harder to contribute verbally without the same social queues you would have in real life.” ([go to data](#))

“I engaged more with other participants in the Shadows, and more with the facilitator in the Cranky Contraptions.” ([go to data](#))

“This inductive learningstyle is much more fun and also frustrating: more feelings and senses are activated.” ([go to data](#))

“[T]here is always a kind of meta level - is the camera on, is the mic on, is my face or my hands in focus and so on.” ([go to data](#))

“I also felt that ‘asking for help’ and collaboration were a bit more difficult (although not impossible) to achieve and did not come naturally to me.” ([go to data](#))

“I especially enjoyed figuring out (finally!) how to prop up my light source, and how to make my crankshaft operate properly, but doing so took time away from other parts of the activity I was eager to get to.” ([go to data](#))

“I am most concerned about children and educators who do not have access to space, materials, and technology to connect, or who would not fully engage unless they were in a shared space.” ([go to data](#))

Summary of Micro Survey 2

Below we list ten quotes from Micro Survey 2 that summarize the 21 responses we received after the PTaaD event. Links to the data in the appendix makes it possible to see the quotes in their context.

“At a distance some advantages were able to have more global community of participants to make alongside and having the materials at home to continue on with tinkering after the workshop was over.” ([go to data](#))

“It was actually one of the things that surprised me: to be able to make that click of this is what children mustfeel like when our teachers in [our organization] accompany them during their experiences.” ([go to data](#))

“On the one hand, for the participant, it presents an attentional challenge: Someone is always in your ear making suggestions. On the other hand, there is value in feeling the constant presence of a sympathetic and attentive facilitiator.” ([go to data](#))

“The knowledge gain was not given and is not concrete. Instead I have new thoughts and ideas that are indefinite but they come from own experience. I guess that this kind of learning will have greater impact in the longer run, but right now it is hard to graps.” ([go to data](#))

“We risked and learned.” ([go to data](#))

“Social attention is still wonky and difficult to control to a satisfactory degree online, but the presence of others was nice and central to my play experience online.” ([go to data](#))

“It was different in that there was more control in some ways e.g. I could decide when and exactly what to share with others, I could alter the volume if I needed to concentrate.” ([go to data](#))

“I fear we may take away guidelines/best practices that work for introductory experiences and apply them to longer-term online co-play where those best practices might not ‘be best.’” ([go to data](#))

“There are some things that get lost when playing together online. You do feel slightly more detached from the other people in the ‘room’. Your mind cannot fill in the missing details.” ([go to data](#))

“How would it have been - if we have been back to work for several months? Maybe the PLAY together would have been stronger? Or maybe not? At least I think it ment something special, that most of us attend from our private houses.” ([go to data](#))

Notes from post reflection meeting on Friday January 26

For the post reflection meeting on Friday January 26, 11 participants showed up. Below is a summary of the notes in my (Ella) notebook that reflects some of the main points that came up in the discussion of the event.

The social space felt **less serious**... It kinda did feel like we were 'peeling potatoes together' (as Amos had phrased it in his intro)

Humor gets lost in the wire...

Your 'online self'... What does it look like?

Learning happens most efficiently in groups. But did we really **engage as a group**? Did we negotiate our ideas? Did we change our perspectives?

It is difficult to **create informal spaces** where you get to know other people. One aspect that may work in this regard is to focus more on integrating personal objects in the maker-activities.

It feels intimidating to speak in online meetings because the space for interaction is limited. In a way, you '**monopolize the conversation**'. It's difficult to read the social cues that structure turn-taking in real life interaction.

The role of the chat was unclear. It was difficult to keep track of. Yet, it adds another dimension to the shared thinking of the group.

Meta Reflection on the Structure of the Conference Itself

Overall the conference seemed to work well as an experiment in designing an event to collectively explore the adjacent possible surrounding playful online interactions. Several participants pointed out that the centralization of all relevant information on the website was clear and simple, and very few reported confusion about where to be or what to do at any given time. The emails before and during the conference appeared to help most everyone stay on track. And offering introductory videos for both the conference itself and the activities seemed to help everything run smoothly.

There seemed to be a good balance between the concrete and the abstract in the reflection breakout sessions. The structure of beginning with shared experiences and later reflecting together on them probably led to the generally positive reports about the discussions being interesting and engaging for all concerned.

There are several areas we observed that could be improved upon. In the final reflection padlet, most groups submitted single padlet entries which contained multiple ideas. In the future, the prompting should be more clear. 'One idea per padlet entry' seems like a better path because it would enable more clarity and experimentation with commenting and ranking during the reflection period just before the final summary. It might also help to communicate the scale and scope of the ideas / adjacent possibles we are looking for if we made 2-3 example padlet entries before the start of the reflection sessions and quickly showed them to the participants via screen share. The goal would be to clarify expectations about scope and quality of padlet entries, and allow us to demonstrate acceptance of a range of different kinds of statements (wide walls). For example, playing online is parallel play could be a sample entry, and having a separate camera for participant's hands could be another: One is an interpretation, and the other is an idea that could be prototyped - and both are welcome. Showing a diversity of padlet-entry outcomes along these dimensions mirrors the practice in introducing tinkering activities of showing participants several different examples of, for example, cranky contraptions. These exam-

ples should demonstrate both low-floor (simple) and high-ceiling (complex) padlet submissions, as well as the wide walls (diversity) of different ideas that can be shared.

Something that several participants noted was a desire for more time for reflection. A few said that having only 2 hands-on activities (instead of 3), and providing more time for reflection after each of them would have been a better format. I think this is worth trying, but it would entail some consideration on how to structure the consequently longer reflection periods. We would need to structure it so that groups of participants invested some of the additional reflection time in a product or outcome - perhaps a more detailed padlet entry, or presentations of ideas to the rest of the group. Otherwise we would risk boring the practitioners who aren't academics that reflect for a living. Still, it might allow for multiple rounds of reflection / creation of padlet entries representing the adjacent possible, which would strengthen the outcomes. Generally speaking, the more iterations the higher the quality - so that's worth exploring in future conferences.

For conferences like this one, and in fact probably all online conferences, more work needs to be done to enable informal, serendipitous encounters of the sort that often happen in in-person conferences. Meeting someone at the bar who wrote a paper that interested you, or a practitioner whose work one admires, or even striking up a conversation with a random person at the coffee machine are all examples of an important type of encounter that's common in real-life conferences, but generally absent from remote ones. How to create "[watering holes](#)" to facilitate these kinds of encounters at the level of the conference itself is worth considering, along with how to justify participants spending time on chance encounters when there are no practical reasons (like needing a cup of coffee) to justify them. These kinds of encounters form a significant part of the justification for traveling to conferences. The talks themselves can easily be recorded and viewed online, but randomly meeting an interesting person or potential collaborator is much more difficult to arrange.

From the results and the survey, it's difficult to evaluate the utility of the "WeUsedTo" PTaaS web application. It may or may not have inspired viewers to reflect on their experience - that's hard to measure and I (Amos) didn't think of a good enough methodology to do so in time. The statements themselves feel a bit too nice in places, suggesting that at least some of the people writing them wanted to please the presenters or to be agreeable about the experiment as a whole, which consequently makes it a bit harder to trust them individually. If we use this or a similar system in a future conference, we would do well to think through how to create a situation wherein it serves a necessary and useful function, so the desired side effect (cross-pollination of reflections on shared experience) is more likely to happen. Using WeUsedTo in this way was an attempt at creating a digital watering-hole for online interactions, but there's no evidence that it was successful.

Finally I'll mention that a challenge for any conference designed on constructionist learning values is that while we argue that experiential knowledge

is more valuable (quality), there's no denying that it takes longer than rote learning (quantity). To justify spending time playing together in this way, designers, participants, and funders must all agree that the approach is justified, in spite of the fact that in terms of concepts and ideas delivered or information transfer, it has no hope of competing with a normal conference. In informal discussions and reflections on the conference during the days and weeks following, several participants I've spoken with have stated that they still think about the encounters and ideas that happened in it, and one said it serves as a point of reference in their discussions with colleagues. We could try to be more systematic about evaluation to prove this value in future iterations of this kind of conference structure. But if one acknowledges that human minds are non-linear and do funny things like suddenly reintegrate knowledge from years prior that previously had no discernable value into an idea or insight, then I think we're in good shape. Alternatively, if one believes knowledge is just the sum of its parts, then this type of conference will probably have a hard time proving its value.

Shared reflections PTaaD Padlet

Please create a post for your group and summarize your discussion for the others to see.

Group 3: Mariana, Klaus, Mara, Federica & Liam

- Introductory aspect (if we have more time we would do things differently, so we must take our impressions with a grain of salt)
- It is possible to create and be playful together but we must think about how to make those experiences accessible, how to identify and design for desirable and undesirable frustrations
- Dimensions of group learning: timing, composition (different zones of proximal development), intentionality in when to be alone, in small groups or in big groups
- We touched on being more playful
- Social pressure to be positive, we don't need to aim for a happy ending, or for all people to have an amazing experience
- Closeness X Being Apart: there are moments that we feel more connected, even with different ways of intersecting (e.g.: seeing the face and the hands at the same time)

How could theoretical learning be more co-creative? Exploratory? How to engage with abstract concepts with tinkering / online?

Group 9:

Group 2: Megina, Ella, Barbara, Andreas, Carl, Sebastian

Carl's suggestion: "Play with more shadows! Because you could do redraws - remixes. För att det var jättesuperkul för mig (because it was really really fun for me)."

Megina:

I am reminded to value the power of parallel play, and that being together engaged in the same activity does feel connected and playful, even if we aren't physically working on the same materials or in the same space. I wonder how to blow more life into those moments of a spark of collaboration (e.g. the camel shadow) and push those to become something more sustained.

Barbara:

our reflections together brought some questions to my mind: how can we design online experiences which are as meaningful as physical experiences and allow collaboration among participants ?

How can we motivate and enhance participation in online activities in a time when most of our life is online and we are really tired of it ?

Andreas: I am really fascinated by our discovery in this session of how the shared online environment actually did something to the experience of being in my own physical space, both on my own, like yesterday, where it helped me to focus, and today, with my daughter, where it

Group 5: Emma, Shari, Tiffany, Carmelo

8 comments

Tiffany Tseng

account for individual learning styles and preferences in a groupenvironment

Anonymous

Interesting challenge is how to accomodate / celebrate/ amplifyindividual differences, strengths, etc. in online group contex

Tiffany Tseng

tension between flexibility of custom tools vs familiarity of standard ones -> lowest common denominator?

Anonymous

How can we radically rethink the structures of group work foronline tinkering?

Tiffany Tseng

ambient updates (radio-style updates in shadow workshop, callingon people but not requiring others to stop working in cranky contraptions)

Anonymous

Considerations for autistic people specifically - e.g. do they prefer higher levels of structure? It is difficult as autism is heterogenous and diferent autistic people have different preferences

Carmelo Presicce

tension between creating new tools and sharing good ways to use existing tools

Carmelo Presicce

challenge of managing atten-

This can be practical but difficult - how could you get your students to express a concept like "atonement" using Scratch? Is there an artistic/constructivist approach to engaging with theoretical ideas?

Challenging because my subject is religious studies - we study what others believe in, like discursus / cultural impact / interpretations. It's not so hands on.

Maybe we ask students to develop materials using scratch / other tinkering activities to invite students to engage with them.

4 comments

Junnan Yu

The candy/snacks are important go to a symbolic value

Linda Greve

The candy created an important shared experience during the breaks

Garrett Jaeger

We also discussed how there was a sense of affiliation with the bigger group, and the purple packaging helped make that sense happen

Megina Baker

Agreed - having the same materials, and the novelty of opening them from a fancy package, creates unity as well as equity of access

Group 1: Ryoko, Anne, Rikke, Stephanie

How can we support collaborative aspects when doing online play?
- some inspirations from online game community

facilitated a really beautiful scratch session. Somehow there were additional qualities added to the physical room by the online interaction. At first I was somewhat disappointed that there were not a lot of 'collaborative play' or exploration, but perhaps that was missing the point of the explorations we were doing.

In an experiment one could systematically explore these different levels. What does the online relation do to the physical learning situation?

Ella: Our discussion makes me think about different types of sociality... In my work with social learning with autistic children, we think of parallel play as a starting point to scaffold more interactive types of play. But perhaps there is something more social about parallel play that we need to understand better. Personally, my favorite way to relax is to hang out with my family and do different things - or overlapping things - together - like you said, Sebastian. So maybe think more about active and passive ways of being social together... Because interaction is also nice... Another thing that I am thinking is about shadows: The activity required human instructions. Perhaps even more than the others... because there were less materials involved (physical and digital). Do we hang out recreatively or proactively???

Sebastian: I would love to explore what happens after the online experience, how can we continue to inspire and share

tion and designing tools that help, as online environments can be overwhelming / information overload

Group 6: Nehyi, Natalie, Sav

We explored how we can experience connectedness in online spaces and discussed our experiences of being a learner in a playful experience.

-Appreciated screen sharing and seeing hands of others and the affordances of being able to decompress during main group sessions by not being on camera.

- Interesting how different facilitation styles affected us and how important it was to be invited to not complete a project - the role of auditory stimulation: to reflect muting can create space to think, hearing others can create a feeling of connectedness,...

- spaces for informal chatter and exploration: valued the conversations at the beginning of a meeting, yet difficult when one was late

Kits of materials sent in the mail

Group 9:

Delivering materials / kits for use together online: This worked well in this conference, but one of our members also did it to teach science of electromagnetism... But how to scale it so you can do it with more people? The kit makes a huge difference. They tried custom making it - wrote people's names, "We look forward to seeing you!" Personalization

- if there is a platform where you can see other members tinkering

When do people feel that they are part of a community? Is it when they do thing synchronously or asynchronously?

Group 8: Marc, Jane, Georgina, Arthur

We covered a lot of ground! We'll summarize our discussion with what we see as a set of interesting questions that came out of it:

- How can we better help facilitators read workshop participants in directed play at a distance (for the purpose of emotional or tinkering-related check ins)?
- Is playing together about PLAYING together at a distance, or just BEING together at a distance? Should we focus on optimizing the BEING together part before we thinking about the play part?
- How do design good environments that let people play together, or in parallel, or even on their own in shared 'at a distance'-environments? How do we let people slip in and out of different modes of togetherness?
- Now that we are all (across age groups) used to being together 'at a distance', and ee are starting to feel comfortable with the technologies involved in togetherness, where do we go next?
- For play for younger people, what is the role of co-located parents and facilitators? And

with each other online afterwards through online tools?

Group 4: Lucy, Ryan, Ben, Line

we spent a lot time talking about ways to create connection and collaboration

provide a reason to play with others

allow for moments of connections outside the "official" session

facilitators need to work to create a permission structure and conditions for collaboration

it's important to be open for surprise and to explore the unknown (and give people choice and ability to take things to new directions). But how?

define the boundaries and then be able to open things up

Instructions

1. Create one or more post(s) for your group.
2. Summarize your discussion.
3. Make sure that all the different perspectives in the group are represented in the summary.
4. Feel free to add photos/drawings/illustrations using your webcam
5. Don't forget to add your names to the post.

1 comment

Amos

Great instructions!

created a positive expectation - something fun is coming. There's lots more potential for kits, including integration of materials around the house with the kit materials.



1 comment

Anonymous

We also discussed the material, symbolic value of the envelopes, that seemed to tie us altogether. For instance having the same snacks during the coffee break while being in different parts fo the world.

Group 7: Mihaela, Lerato, Rupal, Sidsel & Maria

Our summary can be found in the separate comments below:)

7 comments

Rupal Jain

What does playing at a distance mean? Is it doing something atthe same time but still individually?

Rupal Jain

What is the role of time? What is best done synchronously andwhat can be done asynchronously? What would happen if we metup together in a week to share what we had explored in themeantime or what we are

can we help them participate (legitimately) peripherally to build new communities of practice around playing together at a distance?

- How are the various kinds of context that emerge in online play, and how are they different from one another?

thinking about.

Anonymous

Having access to the participants hands would clearly improve the learning and the connection between participants

SIBP

How do you warm-up for playing together at a distance? What kind of simple play/exercises could you do online to get to know each other, to get in the play mode?

SIBP

The host/facilitator plays an important role when doing online play - you need a play master like we also had in the workshops!

Anonymous

Integrating the different platforms into one that allows different possibilities for interaction is definitely needed for easier access

Anonymous

Having the package from the organisers was a fantastic idea! It brought to the event a very distinct touch.

Shared Reflection Session: Google docs from each group ([go to Summary](#))



Share Reflections session

Group 1: Ryoko (fac), Anne, Rikke, Stephanie

- Couldn't see hands, what they were working on
- Struggled more with cranky contraptions
- Music in the background helped
- Felt like sitting around the table during the shadow activity
- Facilitating online makes you more a facilitator than when you are physical present: the proces gets more open-ended
- It might be challenging for kids to do all things together (holding light, drawing, taking pictures)
- How to train facilitators
- Building a safe environment to feel confident --- time, music, facilitator's improvising, making mistakes, no right or wrong, open ended, being able to see what other people are working on,
- There was a collaborative atmosphere in all three workshops --- how can we strengthen the collaborative aspect more?
- Creating online tinkering community (similar to online game community)
- For autistic children what the advantages doing this kind of online activities



Share Reflections session

Group 2: Sebastian (fac), Barbara, Amdreas, Megina, Ella

Notes

Barbara

- Reggio online since march: when we shift from physical to digital, we try to reproduce the physical. In school and non formal. Yesterday: workshops were in person workshops taken online, Scratch is made for online. At reggio we do hybrid now

Andreas

- Scratch with my kid online was great today. Creating links.
- What I didnt quite experience is a connection to the colearner. We need different tools for that maybe

Megina:

- I liked unhangouts we got ideas from someone else and could ask about it. It was great

Ella:

- We didnt do we scratch for a long time. Even though we like it, but now

Megina

- I liked the shadow experience a lot, low bar for entry, it was simple, different ways to play other activities need more materials

Barbara:

- Related to scratch. My daughter plays online games, and they talk online, together in the game space
- Materials. I didnt have the materials for cranky, it didnt work to replace this with cardboard

Anderas:

- Materials were really inviting and it was brilliant to have them. It was really easy to work with them. I felt welcomed
- It helped me to ground myself on one thing. I was not needed that we interact verbally all the time.

Barbara:

- There was an awkward silence yesterday, I tried to fill the silence, not all were keen to share. But maybe there is another way to connect and observe.

Megina:

- I am thinking about different types of play, this was parallel play with opportunities to inspire.
- Collaborative play when we are apart feels harder.
- One collab moment: in the shadow workshop, someone was asking “what did the shadow look like?” [my son] said, it looks like a camel

Andreas:

- Yesterday: why did we not get this collab going? Maybe we need more time? But there was another way of collab.

Materials matter:

- Make a collection or

Barbara:

- Invent something with what you have could be really interesting.
- If you dont give a set of materials, you have to be very open

Andreas:

- Creative confidence is important
- You might not get help to get out of hole, that’s what you need when you are online.
- inspiration

IDEAS and EXPERIMENTS

Andreas: I am really fascinated by our discovery in this session of how the shared online environment actually did something to the experience of being in my own physical space, both on my own, like yesterday, where it helped me to focus, and today, with my daughter, where it facilitated a really beautiful scratch session. Somehow there were additional qualities added to the physical room by the online interaction. At first I was somewhat disappointed that there were not a lot of ‘collaborative play’ or exploration, but perhaps that was missing the point of the explorations we were doing.

In an experiment one could systematically explore these different levels. What does the online relation do to the physical learning situation?

Ella: Our discussion makes me think about different types of sociality... In my work with social learning with autistic children, we think of parallel play as a starting point to scaffold more interactive types of play. But perhaps there is something more social about parallel play that we need to understand better. Personally, my favorite way to relax is to hang out with my family and do different things - or overlapping things - together - like you said, Sebastian. So maybe think more about active and passive ways of being social together... Because interaction is also nice... Another thing that I am thinking is about shadows: The activity required human instructions. Perhaps even more than the others... because there were less materials involved (physical and digital). Do we hang out recreatively or proactively???

Megina: I am reminded to value the power of parallel play, and that being together engaged in the same activity does feel connected and playful, even if we aren’t physically working on the same materials or in the same space. I wonder how to blow more life into those moments of a spark of collaboration (e.g. the camel shadow) and push those to become something more sustained.

Sebastian: I would love to explore what happens after the online experience, how can we continue to inspire and share with each other afterwards?

Barbara: our reflections together brought some questions to my mind: how can we design online experiences which are as meaningful as physical experiences and allow collaboration among participants ? How can we motivate and enhance participation in online activities in a time when most of our life is online and we are really tired of it ?

[My son’s] suggestion: “Play with more shadows! Because you could do redraws - remixes. För att det var jättesuperkul för mig (because it was really really fun for me).”



Share Reflections session

Group 3: Mariana (fac), Klaus, Mara, Federica & Liam

- Introductory aspect (if we have more time we would do things differently, so we must take our impressions with a grain of salt)
- It is possible to create and be playful together but we must think about how to make those experiences accessible, how to identify and design for desirable and undesirable frustrations
- Dimensions of group learning: timing, composition (different zones of proximal development), intentionality in when to be alone, in small groups or in big groups
- We touched on being more playful
- Social pressure to be positive, we don't need to aim for a happy ending, or for all people to have an amazing experience
- Closeness X Being Apart: there are moments that we feel more connected, even with different ways of intersecting (e.g.: seeing the face and the hands at the same time)

Curious about how all the different type of platforms would work together in a virtual conference. It was interesting to me

But also a trade off in choosing if we are seeing the the faces, hands, projects
Moving my laptop down, stopped me from seeing the other people

How to create more accessibility in navigating these different platforms?
The technical struggles made me feel less inclined to share what I was doing

Platforms might put the support group on a spotlight that we might not want to

Knowing each other doubts and strengths also takes time and it is a process

Some activities made me more frustrated/uncomfortable than others

The face+hands thing is important, seeing people working, even when not completely understanding what was happening

In online experiences it might be more difficult for the facilitators because it's harder to see what is happening to each person

Sometimes it's needed an "IT" guy that will help and support only the technical issues
How this person would be integrated or not in the workshop?

The ZPD will be very different for each one of the participants.
A preparation session beforehand can be helpful

The live demos (in particular in Scratch) was more helpful than the videos

Desirable X Undesirable frustration

Larger groups might be better for people that already have a similar amount of experience and smaller groups could be better for more diverse amount of experience

The larger groups tend to be more chaotic

Self-selecting group sizes according to their experiences

Maybe an important aspect is having people that are different doing different things in different ways.

Number of facilitators

Actions for facilitators: playtest and try to predict potential issues

The group learning aspect it was not the type of group learning that I was expecting

What is the choreography, the relationship between the moments alone, in small groups, in big groups

We were not designing something together but just doing something individual together

Stablishing a culture, starting to find out each other interests,

We start doing something alone and only then start doing something together



Share Reflections session Group 4: Ryan (fac), Ben, Lucy, Line

These workshops Fun and interesting
Playing together apart (did very little collaboration)
How can we intentionally plan and collaborate!

Intimidated by playing → to a more fun/collaborative stype
Good to be able to show hands and workspace
Inspiration - <https://www.instructables.com/Sideview-Mirror-for-Video-Calls/>

Try to not just listen to experts talking about what they know
Now making space for unknown topics
Time for quiet working

Ways to make connections (keep people together)
See the experience being about to share with people all over the world
Emotional to work with each other

Amount of preparation involved - for participants and with materials
And with each each other
It's possible to get added to rooms
Having a platform like padlet to share on the gallery walk

If there's different pathways all doing on it's less connected with the thoughts

<https://wonderfulidea.co/blog/2019/7/29/contributing-to-collective-projects-wico-summer-2019-52?rq=chain%20reaction>

Helping people collaborate - as a facilitations
Play exercises with autistic children in school

Making the tasks where people can connect and collaborate

People have different experience levels but what if we were in pairs where we had to make decision and ideas together

Can we have an experience like Carmelo and Rupal (working together)

Also tricky to value the process as much as the product - even with open ending projects - sometime we focus on the project

Contributing to a collective body of knowledges

“Keep track of any discoveries or questions you have”

“And there’s a language too all this”

two semi quotes from Reggio

Shared problems solving

take pictures of all the things that didn’t work

Emphasis on process and how it’s more important than final outcome

<https://www.tinkeringschool.com/mars-about> - example online collaborative projects

can go back and share shadows later

Needs to be a connection before introducing collaborative possibilities

Need permission

Example of sending embroideries of what we’ve done than day

Sharing in a more personal way - not just like social media mode

How to do things - past the official time

What if we do things before or after

Connecting offline after the end of the day

To get an answer of what to do after the conference

Best ideas are shared over the water cooler or coffee -

Or during the breaks in the conference

matchmaking or “dating for the projects”

Both identify things beforehand to match people together

<https://www.tinkeringschool.com/>

How do we make breakout rooms and zooms

<https://decameronrow.com/>

playing games and doing activities

that actually can open things up

Given a task (make facial hair with a slice of bread)

Create the worst smell that you can



Share Reflections session

Group 5: Carmelo (fac), Emma, Shari, Tiffany

(This group did not use the google doc during the reflection.)



Share Reflections session

Group 6: Sav (fac), Nehyi, Natalie

Nehyi: Developing online courses for teachers and parents

Wants to create active learning opportunities in digital spaces. Developing a platform that is compelled by its users. Connectedness

More ways I could play than I could think of

Digital tools as vehicles but also experiencing in a physical space

Sharing shadows on whatsapp - so many opportunities

Daily messages via whatsapp. People don't necessarily have email

Creative learning mobile app

Sav - switching from meta to creating

The email felt webcam like pressure, but Carmelo felt

Used to think have to have to hear - but could turn down when wanted to focus on own

Liked chit chat at beginning when was there and had context

But another time came in later and felt excluded as didn't know what people were talking about

How can we handle that

One idea is to have someone in the chat (or main room) giving context to those just joining -

Break seemed short - since also wanted to have break for coffee or bio break then by time joined it was ending

Limit of online meetings - don't have informal talking time, like you would when in person

Missing shared play space and reconnecting with informal settings

Not enough time to reflect and also share

(can happen in online workshops too that not enough time)

However in-person in the hallway or in between times - can free your mind

Dropping in - Slack can decide when to engage

started using with advisor Slack as place to dump thoughts, see flow of thoughts

With others can be a place to chat

Can turn off notifications

Ways to have space to look out the window, go for a walk, times for reflection

Facilitation - so much to it

Reminded Nehyi of teachers asking questions to encourage children to think

Happy to see similarity - the way that the facilitators interact

See the theory come to life - to experience it as a learner, the role of the adult in the classroom - teachers are not supposed to give instructions, to get to experience that as a participant

How to navigate this when working with adults

Want respect and how to support

As facilitator - Fight natural instinct to tell someone to do something

Liked how facilitator in Cranky Contraptions said at the beginning Don't have to finish anything

Freeing - rare in a workshop - usually have to finish during certain time

Ended up changing idea - made me want to explore, discover

An advantage of being in own space - can keep project out - can continue there

Had gathered things to use for light and shadow

can be overwhelming if too many things - needed to finally just decide

Something for us to consider

Sometimes more mundane things can be most exciting

Sharing back

Ability in Unhangout to join group when ready worked better than Zoom where you are always on or off
Keeping your sound on can be aiding in connecting and comforting - more family life



Share Reflections session Group 7: Mihaela (fac), Rupal, Sidsel

Main instructions:

Based on the experiences you had in the activities and the reflections about them afterwards, what's worth thinking more about when it comes to playing together at a distance?

- How do we actually play together online - and not just make something on our own (are we playing on our own) - and share it afterwards (sidsel)
- What are the advantages of doing it online? (fx being in your own home, inviting people from many different places etc.) How can we enhance these advantages? (sidsel)
- How do you warm-up for playing together at a distance? What kind of simple play/exercises could you do online to get to know each other, to get in the play mode? (sidsel)
- The host/facilitator plays an important role when doing online play - you need a play master like we also had in the workshops! (sidsel)
- Maybe it's worth thinking about how you could create things together - instead of having your own scratch project - maybe you should create something together next time (sidsel)
- Before the event I only had few good examples from online events - but this one made me think of: how can we use this as a global community of learners - it must make it possible to create a new community of learning. Also there are so many ways to facilitate online events and if you do it right - it is not bad at all! (it is actually great). You can get a long way with what you have: camera, zoom etc. (sidsel)
- What would happen if we came back after one week to discuss: what happened after the workshop, what did you play with... When it is online you can also stretch out the workshop

- What does playing at a distance mean? Is it doing something at the same time but still individually? How is making/tinkering online different than playing an online game? I think for me playing an online game still gives me the same feelings as playing in-person w/ friends (for some games). With making/tinkering the thing I miss is the ability to feel like I'm sitting around the table and can peek into other people's process. I also like when the materials are organized and available for me in a workshop space so we are all working from the same resources (Rupal)
- That said, I really liked how Marianna used Mmhm to show both her face and her work space in the same screen - this feeling has been one that I've been missing from other online workshops (Rupal)
- I also appreciated how many of us had the materials for cranky contraptions sent to us and the other workshops (shadow and WeScratch) also had accessible materials. Material access is one of my biggest questions for online workshops - at times I think the ability for ppl to personalize the experience based off of what they have around them is really wonderful and at times I understand how it might highlight inequities and cause ppl to feel like they don't belong (Rupal)
- This conference also highlighted for me two things about online workshops I hadn't thought of as much before: 1) How great it is to have a global community making together and how much I crave more of that in learning environments and 2) By making things in my space at home I've been more likely to pick things up and continue tinkering w/ them over time. (Rupal)
- One question I have about Playing together at a distance is the use of time - what is best done synchronously and what can be done asynchronously? What would happen if we met up together in a week to share what we had explored in the meantime or what we are thinking about. For people who are engaging with these experiences for the first time the limited time of the workshops can be a creative constraint that is overwhelming. How might we design for resurfacing? (Rupal)
- I'm also thinking about how we might design for legitimate peripheral participation and also message this - like maybe after the intro to an activity there is an option to join a begin exploring breakout room and maybe an option to be a vouyer (sp?) and look in at other people's process? (Rupal)

- MT:
- it is worth thinking more about how to incorporate elements of physicality.
 - I was reflecting yesterday on how much/fast I learned from the facilitators/the others while making
 - regardless of whether the event is online or physical could it be that the facilitation of play (with all that is needed) is pinned down to some critical elements? (for a good playfulness facilitation)
 - How do we play around with time in the most efficient way? Re-surfacing
 - Access to technology/data access: Veedo?



Share Reflections session

Group 8: Marc (fac), Arthur, Jane, Georgina

Based on the experiences you had in the activities and the reflections about them afterwards, what's worth thinking more about when it comes to playing together at a distance?

- What are patterns of play? How do we encourage or even enable parallel play? (Or maybe this is an opportunity to play TOGETHER? I.e. we all attend to the same play activities.)
 - How important is sensed (social) presence?
 - Possibilities for sharing.
- How does context matter? Kindergarten vs public libraries, vs. classrooms?
- What does facilitation mean when it comes to playing together at a distance?
- Open-ended play is a lot of work to facilitate online
 - Organisation, materials, planning
- What about play activities outside of the maker movement scope?
- Maybe it is the 'together' part of 'playing together' that is the most central part?
 - Where should attention be in social interaction?
 - How can you give players space when they need it?
 - How to direct, avert and control attention?
- Is this only about guided play (facilitated play)?
 - Good, kind facilitators
- Target audience?
 - Family activity or individual activity?
 - Group size?

. How to ensure input from other players as well=



Share Reflections session

Group 9: Amos, Linda, Ingela, Junnan & Garrett

Knitting

Facilitation - strategies for online meeintgs. Commitment / kind of feeling. Encouraging all the tim.

Integrity - not lecturing - often they are lecturing with a little bit of time to actually do stuff. Not faking it.

Art Research - "Children persist less when adults take over." Garret felt it.

Somting about staying in a playful mode - being vs. thinking about?

As soon as you start thinking about the horse you are riding, the horse disappears.

It was encouraged to be in play,not just thinka bout it.

Easy documentation allowed us to move on to the next and iterate with less concern over how to preserve the moment

Hot mics were liberating, and evoked a sense of community support

Less pressure to talk - but you are still in a shared space, doing something.

Sharing process

Facilitator is checking in - prevents awkward silence.

Not like being cold called - nice to be invited into sharing my struggle or thoughts or what have you. This inviting people in and letting them be quiet when they want to be quiet, but letting people have their space. Unpretentious.

"I'm usually very extrovert, but here I got to be more introverted - I didn't have to interact so much. "I just wanted to go into my zone - I shoe a role where I was very quiet - very unusual for me. Normally I feel responsible for keeping the chat going. "

I also wanted more - to expand how we could collaborate. How can what you do over there change what's happening on my side over here? How can we make it more collaborative?

What are the mechanisms by which we could make more information from participants to each other? Could I maybe make scratch move in some way in response to your noises?

What's still difficult to do online is development - esp. With pep[le you don't know. Are you quiet bc/ you agree? Or dont ? Or your video froze?

How to enable people to work on the same project?

But avoid making it just a game - we do it because it's just for fun, but rather create the space of necessity.

What happens to the concept of local?

Based on the experiences you had in the activities and the reflections about them afterwards, what's worth thinking more about - for you - when it comes to playing together at a distance?

Delivering materials / kits for use together online: This worked with electromagnetism... But how to scale it so you can do it with more people? MAKes a huge difference. We custom made it - wrote people's names, addressed to them - "We look forward to seeing you!" Personalization.

Also creates a positive expectation - something fun is coming.

As an adult, this shows me that there are different interactions and kinds of creativity. "I got access to a new part of myself that I felt was .. I had missed it, but I didn't know it was gone. I found myself smiling all the time." And it flew by.

There was a flow state of mind. Because it's open ended - I could just be in it. I wasn't finished. It was a little buffet - but maybe more time. I could have gone one with Scratch for another hour.

Prefer physical tasks - online -but very low key.

Could be clearer facilitation in scratch breakout rooms - do we collaborate? Have more structure so clear what to do?

Community / icebreaker at beginning of workshop is important. Maybe briefly intro / icebreaker would be great.

Facilitation could take on a diverse set of approaches. For example, one strategy could have us spend 30

min creating garbage or nonsense, and other times we focus on becoming familiar with the tool/platform, and others could involve a focus on collaboration, etc. this diversity could provide multiple entry points for people to enter the experience more deeply

How can we promote more iteration, and in what ways can we map/measure such iteration--thus displaying value for some stakeholders (educators, principals, etc.)?

Approaches to Co-Creation online: Taking it offline (with physical materials) while online.

How could we explore how to do this with co-creation - example of two different museums. Co-creating concepts is hard during lockdown, I miss this most from being able to go in.

How could theoretical learning be more co-creative? Exploratory? How to engage with abstract concepts with tinkering / online?

This can be practical but difficult - how could you get your students to express "atonement" using Scratch? Is there an artistic/constructivist approach to engaging with theoretical ideas?

Challenging because my subject is religious studies - we study what others believe in, like discursus / cultural impact / interpretations. It's not so hands on.

Maybe we ask students to develop materials using scratch / other tinkering activities to invite students to engage with them.

Data from ptaad/weused.to ([go to Summary](#))

In the next six pages you will find all the statements that have been entered into ptaad.weused.to.

I used to think online tinkering was impossible, stressful and distanced.

Now I know it can be engaging, present and funny!

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 17:09:04 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time)

I used to think that people who had not chosen to use new technologies would mostly feel frustrated diving in to using them all at once.

Now I see that in addition to frustration the experience can also encourage joy and playfulness depending on how it's introduced and supported.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 17:04:13 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Natalie

I used to worry about how much time my daughter spent with her friends online.

Now I know that there are ways to make it a more physical experience and will continue to explore it.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 17:00:11 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time)

I used to worry about technology limitations and all the things that go wrong during online workshops.

Now I know that good facilitation can transform tech challenges into learning opportunities and model resilience and being "chill" :)

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:59:58 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Carmelo, location: Cambridge, MA

I used to intuitively think of playing together at a distance as just playing video games with your friends.

Now I am curious what else we can do "here."

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:59:57 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time)

I used to knit during all zoom meetings to stay focused.

Now I am totally behind on knitting but full of great ideas.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:58:44 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Linda, location: Aarhus

I used to think that play was already very developed online (computer games, online board games, role playing, etc.)

Now I think that some forms of play (like sensory-motor play and object play) are very underdeveloped (but clearly holds great potential!).

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:58:30 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Marc, location: Denmark

I used to think that being creative online was an activity you had to do alone.

Now I think that you can get so much inspiration by peeking at other people's projects.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:58:17 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time)

I used to accept the travel and fatigue of conferences.

Now I enjoy knowing I can sleep well in my own bed, and still “travel” to interesting places and meet interesting people.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:58:06 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time)

I used to mix digital and analogue in endless variations.

Now I think again it is the best way forward.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:57:31 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Klaus, location: Denmark

I used to think that the creative aspect of research was enough for me.

Now I realize that I miss this other kind of creativity which is not goal oriented. I will think of how I can use this to connect socially with my friends.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:57:20 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Ingela, location: Stockholm

I used to think we were miles apart.

Now I think you are here even though I’m not looking at my screen.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:57:13 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Anne, location: Denmark

I used to know how kids played...

Now I have two.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:56:53 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: garrett, location: san francisco

I used to think that there would be many more technical challenges when playing online.

Now I feel that with thoughtful preparation, it is possible to decrease the challenges significantly.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:56:48 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Mariana, location: Aarhus

I used to think that it was important for me to hear others to experience their presence in online settings.

Now I value times where I can’t contribute in form of a video to decompress. Even in breakout rooms, I sometimes turn down the volume to give myself more space to think.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:56:34 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Sav, location: Aarhus

I used to awkwardly wait in silence for all meeting participants to arrive.

Now I ‘m inspired to play elevator music, inspired by the Light & Shadow workshop.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:56:28 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: tiff, location: tokyo

I used to think that playing online wouldn’t be very interactive.

Now I think that it can be - with the right resources and facilitation.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:56:23 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Emma, location: UK

I used to think that when I was working at home on something online it would feel private

Now I think it feels public both in positive and unsettling ways.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:56:21 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Mara, location: Boston, USA

I used to be unaware of the effect of facilitation and encouragement in online activities.
Now I have great ideas how to teach my facilitator-team new approaches.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:56:14 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Linda, location: Aarhus

I used to think that virtual learning in preschool was 100% parallel play.
Now I think there are so many ways to create connections and to build on each others play.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:56:06 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Georgina, location: WDC

I used to think facilitators should curate and provide materials.
Now I am excited that learners at home surprise me with their own materials.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:56:01 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Sebastian, location: Tinkering Studio

I used to think that doing scratch with my kids would not really be fun.
Now I know better.... Somehow the shared virtual space did something to our experience at the screen in the same room.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:55:49 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Andreas, location: Denmark

I used to think it was very difficult to find engaging - educational digital games that even children could enjoy.
Now I am happy to see creativity, problem solving and other skills can easily be promoted by this type of interactions.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:55:48 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Nehyi, location: Colombia

I used to think online workshops had more limitations than affordances.
Now I am not so sure. I think the ability to be in someone's personal space, connect w/ a global community, and be set-up to continue w/ an activity in your home and your own time are great opportunities of online workshops.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:55:38 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time)

I used to discuss the possibilities with people who could not see these possibilities.
Now I have a bunch of people who also know it is possible.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:55:36 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Klaus, location: Aarhus

I used to only look at a lot of faces when having online meetings.
Now I see that there are lots of other ways to setup an online event - and they make it much more fun to share and be together online!

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:55:22 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time)

I used to think in person learning experiences were inherently superior to distanced ones.
Now I think that skilled facilitators can make distanced learning meaningful and playful.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:54:51 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Ben Maddell

We used to think that play was just a physical activity.

Now we know that play is an attitude, which can be expressed both physically AND virtually.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:54:49 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), location: Italy

I used to think other peoples' sounds were disturbing during online meetings.

Now I can see how a shared soundscape can make online presence more personal and improve the sense of being socially connected.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:41:09 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Line, location: Aarhus

I used to think that digital play would be difficult to implement in schools but....

Now I worry a bit less than before: you dont need technical expertise to facilitate digital play.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 16:35:40 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time)

I used to only see faces in online conferences.

Now I know how nice it is to see the messy table tops, bended wires & strange shadows of my co-zoomers.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 15:31:20 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: ella, location: aarhus, Denmark

I used to think playing together online would be unengaging.

Now I understand, that it is a matter of facilitation and understanding the possibilities and limits to digital media.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 15:23:13 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Jane Kunze, location: Aarhus

I used to not to be able to specify what is special (for me) in playing with other people in a physical space.

Now I reflected on my experience from yesterday in playing in a virtual space and I realised that my learning was reduced by not seeing the other's hands and all the micro-gestures in working with the materials.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 15:05:51 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Mihaela, location: Denmark, IMC

I used to feel that it was hard to find interactive things to do with my kids.

Now I will make shadow remixes with them.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 14:46:56 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Ingela, location: Stockholm

I used to think that playing together online was difficult, when thinking about interacting, inspiring and relate to each other.

Now I [think] it still is, but using an easy online platform, good framework and being able to see how we interact with materials - it can be done.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 08:26:36 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Sara, location: Denmark

I used to think that playing online would be heavily focused on verbal communication.

Now I know that playing online can feel like sitting around a table and sharing the same space while not having to engage in conversation all the time.

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 06:51:43 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Stephanie Nowack, location: University of Cambridge

I used to think that in-person play was always better than online play.

Now I think that there are some unique affordances to playing together remotely; e.g. there are fewer barriers to participation when the time and cost required to participate melt away. Could that make the experience more playful for some?

date: Tue Jan 26 2021 01:11:54 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Megina, location: Boston, USA

I used to think it was difficult for adults to understand and enjoy play as children do.

Now I love finding more and more adults to play with in different professional settings and even from the distance!

date: Mon Jan 25 2021 23:34:05 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Nehyi, location: Colombia

I used to think that playing at a distance would be very difficult and impossible to have all the playful learning characteristics.

Now I can see that it is possible and fun. Also, we can use anything around the house to make anything. That is the beauty about play IMAGINATION!

date: Mon Jan 25 2021 20:03:09 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Lerato, location: South Africa

I used to accept that online meetings meant being acutely aware of the distance.

Now I know that sometimes it is possible for the screen to melt away, and forget that we are not together in the same space. I wonder why....

date: Mon Jan 25 2021 15:21:19 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Andreas, location: Denmark

I used to think that it is possible to play online.

Now I still think it is - but we need to formulate the how - adding the real global dimension.

date: Mon Jan 25 2021 15:17:34 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Klaus, location: Aarhus

I used to feel patient in facilitating children's learning through play.

Now I am annoyed by the institutional demands on teachers and their drive to keep the status quo in this new space of distance learning.

date: Mon Jan 25 2021 15:14:02 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Garrett, location: San Francisco

I used to be annoyed by zoom calls.

Now I enjoy that I can actually connect with people outside of my household.

date: Mon Jan 25 2021 15:12:33 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Andreas, location: Denmark

I used to think online conferences were only about listening to lectures.

Now I see they can involve play and reflection.

date: Mon Jan 25 2021 15:10:13 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Amos, location: Denmark

I used to think that it was not possible to have online tinkering experiences.

Now I feel hopeful and curious in discovering how online experiences can leverage tinkering (e.g.: collaborative projects with people from around the world)

date: Fri Jan 22 2021 17:29:08 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Mariana, location: Aarhus

I used to think that playing online was about video games.

Now I design and enjoy online experiences where people get together to create and share.

date: Thu Jan 21 2021 16:41:10 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Carmelo Presicce, location: Cambridge, MA

I used to think playful and social tinkering experiences only worked in person. Now I can see that they can work online, and there are many things to try in order to improve them.

date: Wed Jan 20 2021 12:22:02 GMT+0100 (Central European Standard Time), name: Amos, location: Denmark

Survey, day 1

Please take a few minutes to answer these two questions before we meet on Tuesday.

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended?

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life?

Anything else you want to share with us?

29 responses (out of 45 participants). Text highlights by Ella Paldam (summarizing and surprising quotes).

respondent 1/29 (submitted 1/25/21, 7:27 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *
it was explicitly hands-on, and wasn't looking for a reason not to

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *
cooperation was less readily available online. not impossible, but less of an expectation

Anything else you want to share with us?
padlet is fab. [sharing examples of how to do the actual capturing of images and documentation could free up more iteration and trials](#)

respondent 2/29 (submitted 1/25/21, 7:44 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *
I appreciated getting materials in the mail (as well as treats that made it feel extra welcoming) and the encouragement to create being very intentionally designed.

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *
It's hard to peek into other people's processes online. I like the set-up Mariana had w/ mhmm and her additional camera on her workspace. [The ability to see her face integrated into her work space felt really refreshing](#) and I'll try try that out myself.

Anything else you want to share with us?
This is great! Thanks for your efforts in organizing. I like the seamlessness of the website as the one-stop shop. Might be good for the presenters to add their padlet links there, too.

respondent 3/29 (submitted 1/25/21, 7:53 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *
I've never received a playful package with chocolate in the mail before a conference before! Even though the materials in the pack were simple, it was playful and novel to open that together for the workshop. I've also

seldom been able to have my children participate in a workshop before, but actually having [my child] there really deepened the play for me. I'm curious about how it felt for others to have a child there.

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

We had to make more of an effort to engage with each other than if we had been in the same room, but some intriguing connections happened once we started asking each other more questions and sharing our work - like two people partnering in the shadow workshop to document a shadow video. And we got on a roll of giving each other feedback and inspiration that changed the content of several shadow remixes.

Setting up our cameras so we could see each others' hands and workspaces made a big difference and provoked more questions to each other - because we could point to something specific to talk about.

The two workshops were both very interactive but in different ways. I engaged more with other participants in the Shadows workshop, and more with the facilitator in the Cranky Contraptions. ([go to Summary](#))

Anything else you want to share with us?

It's quite amazing to be able to engage with folks around the world in this way; it would normally be very costly and disruptive, to the point of being prohibitive for many participants, to join in a workshop like this. With video conferencing technology, the barriers are lower to participation and that is a tremendous win.

I am wondering how much relationships matter in these interactions. I happen to know many of the folks participating, although I didn't know anyone in my small breakout group before today's session. Nonetheless, knowing folks here made me feel very comfortable to play, mess around, and feel relaxed. I wonder what the experience is like for someone who is more shy, or didn't have prior connections to group members.

One final thought - I happened to have my 5-year-old participating with me in the same room. I've never seen him so engaged in remote learning before - and he's been doing remote Kindergarten for a few months now. I wonder if it was the content and materials, or the fact that he and I were in the same room playing together. This made me wonder about how playing at a distance could potentially also involve bringing in others in your family or household, and what affordances that could have... ([go to Summary](#)) and if that would alienate those who live alone or choose to play alone. This experience was very thought provoking! Thank you for setting it up and I am looking forward to tomorrow!

respondent 4/29 (submitted 1/25/21, 8:02 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

This is the biggest remote making event I have experienced; the participants shared a similar interest about play, learning, and children; it's nice to receive the material package for participation, very considerate!

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

Less interaction with other participants; More challenging to have conversations and see others' projects; But on the other hand, it's nice to work with people from different parts of the world and get to know them

Anything else you want to share with us?

Thanks for organizing this, it's really great! I'm wondering if we participants some time in the future can also organize similar making activities to test some ideas for this wonderful community

respondent 5/29 (submitted 1/25/21, 8:11 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

It is very interactive and hands on. As compared to listening to speakers sharing their knowledge . I like the platform you used of smaller groups while working on our projects so share their ideas . I loved the team work perspective

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

In real life, your playmates are next to you and you can always laugh or admire each other's projects. However, playing online you zone into your playing mode alone and forget to check out what other people are doing. I think it was good to have facilitators who could help us remember to look at other people's projects

Anything else you want to share with us?

respondent 6/29 (submitted 1/25/21, 8:23 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

Time to explore and engage actively in my own learning process.

This inductive learning style is much more fun and also frustrating: more feelings and senses and activated. ([go to Summary](#))

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

Harder to achieve synchrony/reciprocity in the interaction.

Easier to go into flow and do tinkering

Anything else you want to share with us?

Great experience. Looking forward to day 2 :)

respondent 7/29 (submitted 1/25/21, 8:36 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

Haven't actually done a ton of online conferences. But I thought it was pretty good.

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

Was nice to play with people in far away places. Was nice to play in my own home - with more people than would normally fit. ([go to Summary](#))

Anything else you want to share with us?

respondent 8/29 (submitted 1/25/21, 8:42 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

Although other online conferences also have breakout rooms, this one felt different as the feeling was created that one sits around the same table (with the angle of the camera turned towards the table, your materials and your hands). Typically, breakout rooms in other conferences are focused on discussions or other verbal means of communications. Here, the focus was more on the hands and creating things, while still being social (taking the focus away from the verbal communication could be enjoyable for autistic children). One could be in the same 'room' without having to talk or listen all the time. You could simply 'be' and focus on the creation, while being with others. Usually, online conferences require one to constantly engage in discussions. This online conference also felt more informal.

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

The playful element of casually 'peeking' or 'copying' what other people are doing was at first a bit difficult. I sometimes struggled to see what others were creating as their camera angles were not right / their hands were moving too fast / the lighting was bad. The padlet really assisted with this as one could go there to look for ideas to remix. I also felt that 'asking for help' and collaboration were a bit more difficult (although not impossible) to achieve and did not come naturally to me. ([go to Summary](#)) Whereas typically I would ask someone to help me put something together with their hands, now the help would look differently (e.g. taking webcam photo for each other or offering ideas). Also, in an online environment, the facilitator cannot physically touch or interfere with your creations, which might be frustration at first, but can actually be a posi-

tive thing as it gives the players more agency and ownership.

Anything else you want to share with us?

The music offered in the shadow play activity really helped to create an atmosphere of 'being in the same room around a table'.

respondent 9/29 (submitted 1/25/21, 8:55 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

More interactive.

No discussion of academic theories or data.

More fun!

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

Less opportunity for collaboration on the same object.

Nice to be in own home playing with people from across the world.

Anything else you want to share with us?

The high level of preparation was very evident - thank you!

respondent 10/29 (submitted 1/25/21, 10:12 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

The design of the hands-on activities and facilitation was phenomenal, it's pretty rare to find this level of quality in other places. It was the first time I got a package with materials (and candies!) physically mailed before the workshop, that was a great idea.

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

I missed the moments of informal chat / casual conversations with friends and other participants. Sharing felt easier than in person, thanks to breakout rooms and padlets, and also because everyone was very aware of being with others. In my group I've seen sharing work in progress and cross contamination / inspiration. Time seems to run faster online. The transition between being playfully together and finding yourself alone in front of a screen when the workshop is over is very abrupt, it only takes one click. ([go to Summary](#))

Anything else you want to share with us?

I was a bit confused toward the end, I guess I was expecting a moment of closure / "see you tomorrow" in plenary after the second workshop, but I know time was limited and we still have another day to go! Looking forward to tomorrow's sessions!

respondent 11/29 (submitted 1/25/21, 11:00 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

Very different - have not attended such a play workshop before

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

I can't say I have recently had the experience of such collaborative tinkering before so hard to make the comparison.

Anything else you want to share with us?

It would have been helpful to know what you expected to learn from this online conference

respondent 12/29 (submitted 1/25/21, 11:05 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

More playful, more tinkering time, extremely well-organized website and conference communications. AND a mauve envelope. Such a nice personal touch. **The conference also has a more informal feel than other conferences**, which I very much appreciate.

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

The 2 activities differed enough from one another that it's hard to give a general answer. **The shadow activity felt a bit more individually isolated than being in physical room where we might be working/playing together.** It wasn't until we stopped 'working' and intentionally shared something about what we were doing that I felt 'in the room' with other people. But I did have a sense of intense synchronous-yet-separate concentration before that. So actually, now that I think about it, that was interesting. The cranky contraption activity began with personal introductions, which warmed the online space. Also, knowing that we all had similar materials added to the sense of collective play. In both activities, the time seemed to pass more quickly than it would have in person. I don't know why that is: it's curious.

Anything else you want to share with us?

I really enjoyed the activities. I did feel digitally challenged in 2 senses of the word: 1) technologically, particularly in the shadow activity, I was having trouble keeping up with the learning while also learning how to document then upload via padlet, and to be checking out resources online. It was a bit overwhelming. Digital challenge #2 has to do with the manual challenge of only having 2 hands/10 digits! It was a bit hard to be building things and trying to photograph, and hold a light source/operate a crankshaft all at the same time. It was fun to work out these technical challenges--**I especially enjoyed figuring out (finally!) how to prop up my light source, and how to make my crankshaft operate properly, but doing so took time away from other parts of the activity I was eager to get to.** ([go to Summary](#)) Though I suppose therein is the learning!

respondent 13/29 (submitted 1/25/21, 11:24 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

It was absolutely engaging. Also I really valued the fact that we were all able to make mistakes and were not expected to come up with a solution right there, but instead were encouraged to continue thinking about our work. **It made me stay for another good couple of hours analyzing what went wrong in my designs, what made them difficult to execute and come up with solutions.**

I loved the fact that as everyone was developing their own prototypes at the same time, I could see some of the problems I also had and how others were approaching those same problems.

The moderators did a great job in keeping us all engaged by asking questions about what we were doing and making small chat from our responses, so that created a close and familiar environment, which of course made it easier to participate.

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

I guess because everyone was so focused on their own work at the beginning we did not share much of what we were doing / talk between each other; which is usually something that goes differently when you are playing together in real life. Nonetheless I believe once the moderators started asking questions and inviting people to participate it felt really natural.

Anything else you want to share with us?

I loved how both activities promoted storytelling and the fact that when people were sharing their work they were not only focusing on the different characters that they were finding / creating, but also telling small stories about those characters.

respondent 14/29 (submitted 1/26/21, 2:34 AM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

More active play time, minimal talking-at lecture-style sessions

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

I found myself adjusting my laptop webcam frequently to [try to switch between showing what I was building with my hands and being able to view other people's projects / updates during check ins and discussions](#). Sometimes I forgot to switch between the two.

Anything else you want to share with us?

I thought the use of Padlet was very compelling, especially for sharing in progress work!

respondent 15/29 (submitted 1/26/21, 4:10 AM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

I really appreciated the opportunity to [dive in quickly and start creating together in small groups, and then to reflect](#). I appreciated that the initial videos and materials and the introductions were shared beforehand so we could dive in to participating and creating together. And liked the way the opening plenary focused on a specific question for us to explore - including Amos offering a definition of play at the beginning, and Ella describing the potential of online experiences for children on the autism spectrum.

I am fortunate to collaborate with some of the organizers, so have had some similar creative and constructive workshop experiences.

Overall this approach differs from so many other online conferences that are focused on presenting and are not grounded in shared, creative experiences. Or if they have a shared experience it's often very quick and does not include much reflection.

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

There were some aspects that were better, and some that were more challenging. It was nice to be able to see close up what others were working on (and to have a unique way to collaborate through remixing Ryoko's example shadow), as well to focus on my own process. On the other hand, [there was less serendipitous meeting/ collaborating with someone new and harder to know where everyone else was in their process without the body language](#), as Amos had mentioned. I felt I was missing seeing everyone and getting to interact more informally between sessions (I missed the break). I felt fortunate to be with the thoughtful and creative people who were there!

Anything else you want to share with us?

In general with online workshops I am most concerned about [children and educators who do not have access to space, materials, and technology to connect, or who would not fully engage unless they were in a shared space](#). ([go to Summary](#)) Some people in our room mentioned they had trouble connecting to the Zoom room. This most often happens in our other work with people who have limited internet access.

On the other hand, I appreciate you emphasizing that there are also advantages to online that we could maximize and explore further. my neighbor's grandson is on the spectrum and I have heard that the online experience of school has been better for him than in-person (as he had been having a lot of difficulties in person), aligning with some of the affordances of managing online social interaction as Ella had described in the introduction.

So I appreciate that you are looking at [both affordances and challenges of online playful learning](#), and how to address the challenges. And I'm interested to talk and reflecting more tomorrow.

respondent 16/29 (submitted 1/26/21, 5:32 AM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

The lack of identified learning goals

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

I could hear the feedback the facilitator was giving to any of the participants and I could easily see what other participants were working on.

Anything else you want to share with us?

I felt the "floor" was too high for someone brand new to these activities

respondent 13/29 (submitted 1/26/21, 7:51 AM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

There are times for the participants to have hands-on experience and reflection.

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

It is somehow different though we want to make it as authentic as possible. The kind of social interaction is not that easy and thus, not easy to seek help and learn from others....

Anything else you want to share with us?

respondent 18/29 (submitted 1/26/21, 8:32 AM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

It was very well prepared - the website, the intro videos, the physical materials etc.

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

The major difference to me is the shared product at the end - the padlet

Anything else you want to share with us?

My reflections are around how to make these activities even more social - so it is not 'just' parallel play but even more playing together

respondent 19/29 (submitted 1/26/21, 8:33 AM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

We were playing a lot more than reflecting

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

It was not always easy to interact and see what the others were doing with the materials.

Anything else you want to share with us?

respondent 20/29 (submitted 1/26/21, 8:33 AM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

It was a lot more interactive and engaging, and not being asked to mute or to turn off the video was useful in this case.

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

It was unique. I think it was in some ways better but in some ways worse than playing together in real life. Advantages include being in your own space which can be more comfortable (and perhaps easier to focus on the task at hand and get really engrossed in it), being able to choose when and what you show others in the

group - so perhaps this element of control which I think may appeal to some. Some things I found difficult include that when I was tilting the screen (and hence the webcam) on my workspace so others could see what I was doing, it was then more difficult for me to see what others were doing which made it harder to interact with others. I also didn't receive the pack, so it was hard with the resources I had to build something, which was frustrating at times.

Anything else you want to share with us?

I am really enjoying this experience and really appreciate all the effort required to put everything together, so thank you!

respondent 21/29 (submitted 1/26/21, 11:50 AM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

Doing something together was clearly an advantage.

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

As an introvert, it was somehow easier to be in this space. But I think in real life I would have gotten further way with my idea than I did in this event. I struggled with my creature and I didn't feel comfortable to ask for more help. In real life, if someone would have seen me I think I would have been helped much faster.

Anything else you want to share with us?

respondent 22/29 (submitted 1/26/21, 12:30 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

Easier to interact with others, great to do something hands on that we can share so easily. I like the small break out groups, these worked well.

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

It was difficult to observe and learn from what others were doing/making and harder to contribute verbally without the same social queues you would have in real life. ([go to Summary](#)) But it was great to be able to share digitally on padlet and interact this way as it was pretty instant and enables you to come back to it at a later time.

Anything else you want to share with us?

respondent 23/29 (submitted 1/26/21, 1:03 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

The issue of participation, hands-on activities, the break-out sessions and the great facilitators of the work-shops!

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

The informal and safe atmosphere - it was noncommittal in a way. You could manage what to share and so on meanwhile you felt a part of a group. But the lack was "the helping hand" - someone to get inspired from, someone to chit-chat with, someone to help you hold the contraption...

Anything else you want to share with us?

Thanks for a great great day! I think the facilitators were great - one created an informal non-pressure context and the other was so dedicated to the subject, so you felt free to ask and knew you got a well qualified answer. I know the time was limited, but maybe it could have been nice with a little break - without any break-out room? Just 3 minutes.

respondent 24/29 (submitted 1/26/21, 2:44 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

Lots more hands-on activities. **People were asking: what are you doing?** Had more energy. Time went really fast!! -> and I think that's a good sign :-)

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

Yes: we were together - but also on our own. In the first exercise (cranky contraptions) it was difficult to have time to also check out what the other participants were doing. Focus was mainly on my own project. Normally I think I would look at what the other participants were doing. **It made it possible to join in on a shared conversation - but also be alone with my project without too many eyes on my project.** That was actually kind of nice.

Anything else you want to share with us?

You did a great job with planning this - **lots of interesting people attending** and a great flow!

respondent 25/29 (submitted 1/26/21, 2:45 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

In every way, foremost by being highly interactive and creative.

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

For me, it was a bit more difficult to get a coherent picture of what was going out. I rather zoned out into my own creative space.

Anything else you want to share with us?

I really enjoyed playing together, despite the distance between us! Thanks for arranging everything so well.

respondent 26/29 (submitted 1/26/21, 2:49 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

It's the first online conference I have attended **with a practical and experiential aim.**

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

Hard to answer. It of course differed in many different ways, but it did create the same collective feeling, which was nice.

Anything else you want to share with us?

respondent 27/29 (submitted 1/26/21, 3:07 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

Much more interactive, more informal talk and more flow - **but less "transmission of knowledge" and too few notes :-)**

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

less interaction, less inspiration

Anything else you want to share with us?

It was super fun - and especially the great facilitation was an inspiration, I will take with me!

respondent 28/29 (submitted 1/26/21, 3:19 PM)

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

More hands on time - time to engage

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

there is always a kind of meta level - is the camera on, is the mic on, is my face or my hands in focus and so on ([go to Summary](#))

Anything else you want to share with us?

respondent 29/29 (submitted 1/27/21, 9:35 AM) NB! after the second day was over.

How did this experience differ from other online conferences you've attended? *

FUN!

How did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life? *

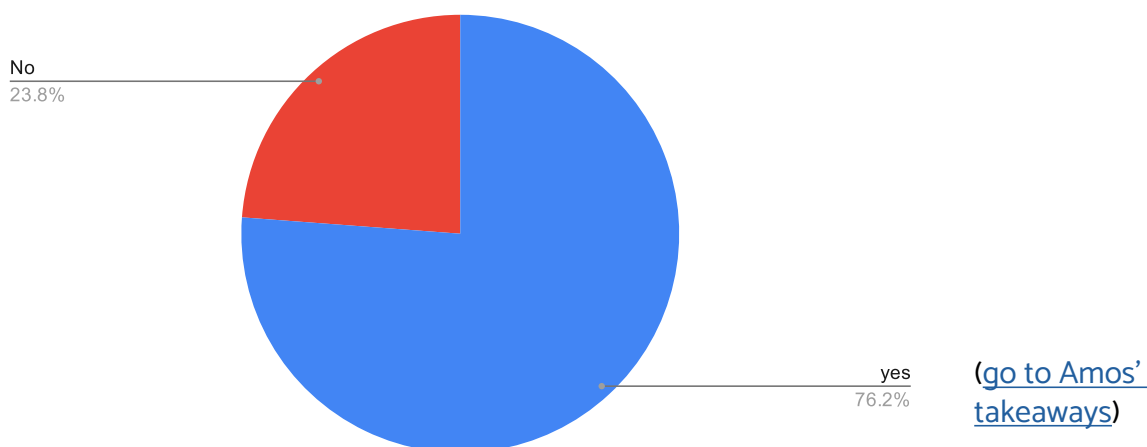
It did not. **The format was different, but not the playing and experimenting in it self...** The question is more what would have happened if we had to do other kind of stuff together

Anything else you want to share with us?

Survey, day 2

Please take a few minutes to answer these five questions.

Did you receive the purple envelope of play materials from us in time for Day 1? (21 responses)



1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences you've attended?

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ from playing together in real life?

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and then reflecting on it again from the perspective of your role as a researcher / educator. What do you think of this structure as a way of setting the stage for group reflection?

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs, story-telling) when they took part in the activities together? And if so, how?

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own? If so, please describe what was inspiring, and how it changed your creation or creative process.

Anything else you want to share with us?

21 responses (out of 37 participants). Text highlights by Ella Paldam (summarizing and surprising quotes).

respondent 1/21 (submitted 1/26/21, 9:29 PM), Envelope: yes.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...?

I liked the focus on interactive workshops and that all attendees seemed engaged and invested in the process. I've attended other online events, but none that were focused just on interactive sessions and none that included so many moments for reflection and connection.

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...? I think in real life there is the ability to look in at someone's process more and that was the main constraint I felt. At a distance some advantages were able to have more global community of participants to make alongside and having the materials at home to continue on with tinkering after the workshop was over ([go to Summary](#)) were a few of my favorite things about it.

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...? I think it would have been nice to have a reflection session at the end of day 1 like we did at the end of day 2 because it would have allowed me to digest more of the thoughts around the experience for me as a learner.

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...)? At times, I think it is still something to practice how you show your hands and angle your screen.

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own? In the shadow activity, I looked in at other's processes and saw many others playing with glass and color variations. I hadn't explored this yet and it got me excited to try and so I did.

Anything else you want to share with us?
Thank you for all of your efforts and the treats!

respondent 2/21 (submitted 1/26/21, 11:28 PM), Envelope: no.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...? I simply loved it. Most of the conferences I attend, even those that are supposed to be about play, have very little or no opportunity to play at all. No exploration, none of the richness provided in the workshops we enjoyed during these two days. I greatly appreciate the role of the facilitators, whom I believe did a terrific job accompanying us while we discover, got frustrated, analyzed, tried and enjoy every step of the way.

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...? Specially at the beginning I guess because it was probably new for a lot of us, people were more quiet than what you usually encounter in a "real life" setting. I guess the other thing that can be a bit different (and actually better) is the fact that as you are not seated next to the same person for the entire meeting, interactions between the group members vary easily, which probably helps you connect with more people.

Also, as the experience was in my own house, once it was finished I got to continue working on what I wanted, which in a real life setting would have been more difficult due to the fact that I have to pick up everything and leave the room. So that was added value!

Something I missed was the fact that in "real life" settings you usually get a bit more time for coffee breaks (or small bathroom breaks) so that the feeling of the back to back meeting is not something you necessarily experience.

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...? It was really well thought like that, and I indeed experienced it as it was intended. It was actually one of the things that surprised me: to be able to make that click of this is what children must feel like when our teachers in [our organization] accompany them during their experiences. ([go to Summary](#)) To feel that facilitator was not there to give me answers. To know I was not expected to have a finished product but instead I was there to explore, to enjoy, to create. It made me more conscious of the learning process, which at the same time reflects in deeper takeaways for my professional perspective.

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...)?
Not that I can recall right now, *other than the stories told about their creations.*

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own?
Definitely. This was especially clear in the Light and shadow workshop, where we were able to see the camera pointing at everyone's desks. I got inspiration from different sources, both by seeing what they were doing and by them sharing their challenges.

Anything else you want to share with us?

Just a BIG THANK YOU. I am very honoured to have been part of this process.

respondent 3/21 (submitted 1/27/21, 12:37 AM), Envelope: yes.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...?
Honestly, I have not been a participant in other online conferences--though I have been a presenter. From that perspective, *there was a lot less formal presentation at this conference, and a lot less reliance on 'expert talking heads.* How nice!

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...?
I find it a little hard to make the comparison. *While there was a sense of community during the various activities of this conference, mainly it felt to me like parallel play rather than playing together.* So, to compare it to parallel play activities in real life, I felt the absence of being able to physically go and look at/try out other people's works and hacks. That said, the facilitation of the activities felt more omnipresent: In physical settings, the facilitator usually spends considerable time visiting each person/group individually, which means that one is mainly working solo.. In this experience, the facilitator's coaching was more continuously present---in other words, the facilitator spent more time talking to the group as a whole. This is an interesting difference, and it's worth thinking about how to leverage its possibilities. *On the one hand, for the participant, it presents an attentional challenge: Someone is always in your ear making suggestions. On the other hand, there is value in feeling the constant presence of a sympathetic and attentive facilitator ([go to Summary](#)).* I wonder if there are ways to re-think the structure and sequence activities to make the most of this difference.

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...?
I liked it. *I will confess that I especially like the second day's reflection.* It was interesting to reflect on the experience as a researcher/learning designer and to hear my colleagues' reflection from that perspective as well.

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...)?
I found my attentional focus so filled by the tasks at hand--i.e., learning new technologies, trying to document and share my work, doing the activity itself--that I fear I didn't look up to see what other people were doing nearly as much as I might have. *I did hear other people ask the facilitator for guidance, and those 'overhears' were helpful.*

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own?
During the shadow remix activity, at some point toward the end *I saw that another participant was using a headlamp as a light source. Brilliant!* It hadn't occurred to me to do so--though I have a headlamp--and it was a really helpful adjustment, even though it came a bit late in the game.

Anything else you want to share with us?

Just a big thank you again for the opportunity to participate in the conference. It was very thought-provoking and mainly very enjoyable--although *I did feel attentionally overwhelmed at a few points.* I'm excited to learn more (in due course) about how it shapes your lab's research and development initiatives.

respondent 4/21 (submitted 1/27/21, 5:16 AM), Envelope: yes.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...?

Much more interactive and **thoughtfully choreographed**, really appreciated the reflection time, also excellent facilitators

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...? There are advantages and drawbacks to both.

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...? I thought it worked well

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...)? I wasn't focused on this and **didn't notice it**

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own? Not so much

Anything else you want to share with us?

Thanks for organizing such a stimulating conference! It was a highlight of my week.

respondent 5/21 (submitted 1/27/21, 8:51 AM), Envelope: yes.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...? **The knowledge gain was not given and is not concrete. Instead I have new thoughts and ideas that are indefinite but they come from own experience. I guess that this kind of learning will have greater impact in the longer run, but right now it is hard to grasp. ([go to Summary](#))** It was definitely a more fun and engaging conference than the more ordinary ones.

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...? **It was hard to achieve reciprocal interaction, but it was obvious that there was synchrony and community.** So some elements of real time playing were present online, but not all the "ingredients" were there. But maybe that is exactly the beauty and strength of it?

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...? I like the structure but think it could be facilitated even more - maybe with **more visual clues so that you remember from which perspective you are working.**

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...)? Yes there were **more sounds, movements and little stories than there were actual conversations.** I think this resembles very well the perspective of a child that is playing and fun to watch that also an adult could engage in play in such a way.

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own? Other people's use of materials inspired me and on Scratch I was inspired of codes that could do things that were fun. It was hard though to actually see others tinkering projects on screen - **I lacked some dimensions and often what I was curious about was quickly gone again on screen.**

Anything else you want to share with us?

I wonder how a school would look like if we used the learning strategies that you used in this conference. I feel more confident now that **this HAS to be explored.** Thank you!

respondent 6/21 (submitted 1/27/21, 9:28 AM), Envelope: yes.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...? more focused on play and reflection than presentation and sharing of knowledge. **more international group of participants from a wide variety of settings.**

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...? I think the biggest challenge is facilitation because you can't observe and wait to step in as well as collaboration is harder when we're not all sitting around a table and spontaneously connecting to others projects.

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...? I think it makes sense although in the last reflection my group seemed hesitant to make connections to their own work *more excited talking about videos with family and friends.

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...? in the cranky contraptions activity we deliberately turned the cameras down to focus on hands and that was helpful

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own? yes in cranky contraptions [a participant] had the idea to make a dragon and then I turned my dancing ribbon into a dragon character as well

in scratch we decided to make a collaborative art work and that was an interesting way to play with a small subset of the scratch blocks (the pen function)

Anything else you want to share with us?

respondent 7/21 (submitted 1/27/21, 9:32 AM), Envelope: yes.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...? Much more fun and important, because we tried it out. We risked and learned. ([go to Summary](#))

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...? There are many forms of play. Not one online and one in real life. There are all the time combinations and they are all real. Play is always in a context. To separate in the way you ask in the question is history...

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...? I liked it. it was much more interesting. It was like conferences should be. Group reflections based upon thing we tried out together.

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...? I do it a lot normally doing zoom to handle the distance between us. Here my communication were through what we did: experimented using digital and analogue tools. So hands and scissors and the screen itself - and sound and words became part of the way communication took place. Potentially a multimodal language based upon what we did together...

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own? Yes, I looked and listened to what the others were doing - and got help from the guide and the tutorials as well. it was a bit like sitting around a big workplace table doing your own stuff and talking to the others and getting ideas from what they were doing... or like children do...

Anything else you want to share with us?

Very interesting to for once to be together in an online workplace, and not just boring meetings - and using the software for this. Much more to explore here.

As for being alone and together, there is a future with much diverse combinations: Many or few people here and many or few people there communicating and playing.. - but online and offline, synchronously and asynchronously...

Well done, Ella and Amos. And the rest of course, but you were the organizers. Do it again!

Just contact me, if there are more you wanna discuss... Im [in town] or home...

respondent 8/21 (submitted 1/27/21, 9:44 AM), Envelope: yes.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...?
It was a wholly new experience, and I appreciate the mix of practical assignments and intellectual reflection.

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...?
I rarely play with others IRL, but one reflection is that I got very absorbed in my own process while playing IRL likely would have made me interact more with others while working. *For me, it was quite relaxing to become more introvert.*

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...?
I am not sure how to use this in teaching, but it was a good opportunity to reflect upon aspects of creativity in my role as a researcher.

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...)?
I was totally focused on my own work and did not look so much at the screen. *It was rather the verbal murmuring that made me feel part of group interaction (despite being silent myself).*

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own?
I mainly got inspired by those leading each activity, such as the presentation of using shadows.

Anything else you want to share with us?

Next time, I'd appreciate *joint projects where we literally can create something together*. Thanks for a really well arranged and inspiring conference!

respondent 9/21 (submitted 1/27/21, 10:11 AM), Envelope: yes.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...?
I hadn't tried to use the padlet for shared learnings before. I believe that worked very well

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...?
For me tinkering often becomes a specific type of play where I like being in others company but I do play in parallel with them. I'm focusing on my ideas and the materials.

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...?
I find it highly valuable to be hands-on with a shared experience

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...)?
I don't really know about the nonverbal communication as I primarily looked at my own making

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own?
I didn't get to that level during the activities - *I would probably have needed a little more time*

Anything else you want to share with us?

respondent 10/21 (submitted 1/27/21, 10:30 AM), Envelope: yes.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...?
Much more interactive

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...?
Less interactive and less inspirational - but still fun

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...?
I found the structure really good and the roles were very clearly communicated

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...)?
Well, storytelling is verbal, most times. **However, I found myself not looking very much at others during the conference - I was too focused on my own work.** During the reflections, I think gestures etc were used as normal.

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own?
The examples were very illustrative and they shaped my products somewhat. Also ideas that came up in the breakout rooms affected my thoughts and ideas

Anything else you want to share with us?

I really enjoyed the conference - **it is the fastest 6 hours on zoom in my life!** I really found the facilitation and framing very inspirational and I will take that into my practice. Thank you!

respondent 11/21 (submitted 1/27/21, 10:36 AM), Envelope: yes.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...?
The hands-on thing was quite different from other conferences.

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...?
It highlighted how important the social aspect is. **Social attention is still wonky and difficult to control to a satisfactory degree online, but the presence of others was nice and central to my play experience online ([go to Summary](#)).**

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...?
Good structure

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...)?
No, not really - **well they took photos of their creations**, but that was what I noticed.

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own?
The padlet in the shadow play gave me a few ideas to pursue.

Anything else you want to share with us?

respondent 12/21 (submitted 1/27/21, 10:37 AM), Envelope: no.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...?
It was a lot more fun, interactive and engaging, and so I learned more than at other conferences I have attended (**although they have had different purposes so it is difficult to compare**) .

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...?
It was different in that there was more control in some ways e.g. I could decide when and exactly what to share with others, I could alter the volume if I needed to concentrate. ([go to Summary](#)) Not being in the same physical space is an obvious difference, instead being in a similar virtual space which allowed one to feel like you were not isolated.

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...?
I think it is a good structure - it is good to think of different perspectives. I think what would be even better is to get the perspectives of people who would be directly involved as learners - **e.g. if the aim is to explore**

playing together at a distance for autistic children - it would be useful to get their perspectives (if possible) or their caregivers' perspectives.

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...? I'm not sure I can remember as I was too focused on what I was doing most of the time rather than observing others.

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own? With the Shadow Remixes activity I was inspired by others using glass objects to see different lighting effects - I wanted to do something similar so I found a glass object and explored this. With the Cranky Contraptions activity I was somewhat stuck and the facilitator helped me to think of an alternative way to solve the problem which made me feel less frustrated.

Anything else you want to share with us?

respondent 13/21 (submitted 1/27/21, 11:03 AM), Envelope: yes.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...? I haven't attend very many, actually. But I thought there was a very good mix of active and passive participation.

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...? Andreas's last words about 'parallel play' vs. 'playing together' resonated with me. I enjoyed it quite a bit. It was nice to have full control over the space. When I was done, I didn't have to clean up anyone else's mess but my own, but I still got to be together with all of these people.

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...? Really good. The last reflective conversation we had was really fruitful (one downside was that (I'm on european time) I was pretty tired by that time). The group had ample shared experiences to discuss.

Our discussion there at the very end was about this shared experience we had had - which was, for most people, an 'introductory' experience to Scratch, automata, shadow play. I fear we may take away guidelines/best practices that work for introductory experiences and apply them to longer-term online co-play where those best practices might not 'be best' ([go to Summary](#)).

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...? Hmm.. I didn't spend much time looking at my screen when doing the activities. partially this is due to my having only one screen and working on a laptop. Also due to group sizes - it was difficult to see what people were making in their tiny zoom rectangle.

So I can't say.

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own? In our Scratch group almost everyone recorded sounds together - with the whole group making eagle screeches, electric shear sounds, and something else... We did this by all making the sounds at the same time while someone recorded on their computer.

Anything else you want to share with us?
This was pretty great - hope it feels like a success.

respondent 14/21 (submitted 1/27/21, 3:03 PM), Envelope: no.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...? Definitely more hands on!:-) And very smooth organisation - even though we were on several platforms,

which normally creates a lot of questions/frustration - also I noticed that the participants were also well prepared compared to other online conferences

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...? There was less peer-to-peer interaction than there would have been in a physical workshop - which was both good and bad. I was for instance able to concentrate better than I normally would in a physical workshop, on the other hand you did not get any input/questions answered from your peers in the workshop.

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...? Really good - reflections in the end were great. I have trouble multitasking and quite often it is expected that you do a workshop at the same time as you reflect on, how could this work in my professional settings - I find that super hard and often end up doing only one thing or the other.

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...)? I didn't really look at the other participants while in the workshops... the facilitators asked us to turn the camera to our hands and since I use the camera on my laptop, I couldn't really see the other participants, when I was working (which was nice, no distractions:-), but I could hear then (mumbling, cursing, cheering, humming and so on) which I thought was very cosy and also kept me committed - I am in this with others, I can't switch to another activity - that would be super rude.

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own? Only if the activities had breakouts so there was time sat aside for looking at each others projects

Anything else you want to share with us?

respondent 13/21 (submitted 1/27/21, 3:52 PM), Envelope: yes.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...? completely different! I felt connected, engaged, and interested the whole time, and felt like an active participant in constructing knowledge with others rather than being talked at.

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...? I think that the online experience lends itself to more parallel or associative play rather than collaborative play, which is easier to achieve in-person. That said, there were more moments of collaboration and thought exchange in this conference than I expected.

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...? excellent! very effective.

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...)? hands, yes - a lot. some movement (esp during the day 1 workshops) no songs or storytelling experienced

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own? Yes - during the Scratch workshop I was viewing others' screens and saw another person in my workshop had incorporated a "button". I was curious about this and asked how she did it, and she taught me how. Then I added one to my project and we continued to have a back-and-forth exchange about that. I appreciated being able to see other's work in the Unhangout and easily speak up and ask questions/connect with others in the group.

This also happened during the shadow workshop - someone in the group shared a picture of a shadow he had created, and asked others "what do you think this should become?" that was a lovely moment of collaboration in ideas.

Anything else you want to share with us?

Thank you for putting this together. It was an excellent learning experience!

respondent 16/21 (submitted 1/27/21, 4:15 PM), Envelope: no.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...?

Having collaborated with LLK and Tinkering Studio it was very close to what I expected in terms of activities, level of involvement and relational dynamics

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...?

Well, it is very different in many ways and from many points of view. I will try to outline some: the level of engagement, the overall context, the kind of connection with other participants and the facilitator. I experienced some frustration when I tried to talk to other people during the tinkering activities and no one was willing to be in a conversation with me. Of course we were observing each other, but I do not feel like this was a deep connection ...

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...?

The first part was harder for me, I mean thinking to only be a participant and playing (with the others), I was continuously distracted by the researcher's perspective that kept coming to my mind ...

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...)?

Yes, non verbal was mostly used during the Tinkering studio activity; there was more talking during the cranky contraptions activity. In both cases participants were showing their tables/walls, hands and materials

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own?

I tried to take inspiration by others especially when I was more challenged (cranky contraptions and with Scratch), I was looking for technical suggestions and preferred not to ask the facilitator but tried following the example of others who were doing the same thing. It worked well from my side.

Anything else you want to share with us?

I really appreciated the way you organized the conference and workshops, experimenting firsthand is a clever way to go deeper and understand more creating a cycle between practice, theory and then practice again and theory again. I am really grateful for the opportunity I had to join. Thank you !

respondent 17/21 (submitted 1/28/21, 9:50 AM), Envelope: YES.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...?

great - I missed the opportunities to seek dialogue with participant that I know share the same agenda, to meet them and talk in general about the same agenda in relation to your workshops

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...?

I was tuff. I sometimes miss that to see others work to get inspired from them. And also to feel that we are all jumping into the experiences with the same approach (absolutely exploration and curiosity). It was good that you asked us to keep our micro on. that helps a lot. You were also good at facilitating that we all felt that we were in the same boat.

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...?

Loved the way that we moved our cameras to focused on our hands and work. Not easy when you work from home sitting in the bed. (the only room where it is possible). Loved the Padlet platform, where we could see each others profile. (the last one could maybe invite into more interactions between each other). And the platform where we shared our work. An idea is to create a platform where you both show your process, where you calls and showcase of results and ideas).

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...?
absolutely - we were almost like the boy with a car figure saying Wrronn wrroonn. :)

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own?
By using the Padlet platform in combination with realtime dialoge we have the opportunities to revisit the idea. In physical workshop we can always revisit ideas and look deeper into participants ideas that inspire us the most. That you miss in online sessions, because you cant go back to rediscover the idea.

Anything else you want to share with us?
you did at great job

respondent 18/21 (submitted 1/29/21, 3:40 PM), Envelope: yes.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...?
It was definitely more playful!

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...?
I didn't feel we were playing "together". I was clearly playing, but alone mostly:) Was good nevertheless to get feedback from the facilitators.

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...?
This worked well for me.

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...?
Yes. Songs added by the "playing with shadows facilitator". Showing prototypes and hands on the camera. But not as much as I expected.

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own?
-

Anything else you want to share with us?
-

respondent 19/21 (submitted 2/1/21, 9:38 AM), Envelope: yes.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...?
I enjoyed how hands-on the conference was.

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...?
I really liked how the workshop facilitators tried to build in process into the activity, from using Padlet to asking people to live demo their work. The context switching between having your camera show your work and being able to adjust the laptop screen to see other people's projects was awkward compared to in-person activities. It also was harder to ask questions to a single person, as you would in an in-person workshop where you might ask the facilitator for help or ask another person what they're doing without drawing attention from everyone/.

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...?
I liked this process. I wonder what the workshop might have been like to have workshops on one day and then reflections on the other. I'm not sure how necessary it was to have 3 different activities - maybe one hands on and one digital experience would have sufficed to leave more time for discussion and takeaways.

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...?
In cranky contraptions, it helped a lot to see other people's materials to understand their process.

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own? I didn't directly draw from other people's examples during the workshop, but it felt far more communal to see the examples. The padlet page automatically updating when people added their work made it feel like you were all working together. I think the organization of content, and [the ability to read people's descriptions at your own pace](#), made it feel more collaborative than the live zoom video.

Anything else you want to share with us?

I wish there were more time to get to meet other people, as you were able to bring together an impressively diverse range of participants! [Somehow, in the hands-on activity, there wasn't as much time to get to know others - maybe if our projects were telling a story about ourselves directly?](#)

respondent 20/21 (submitted 2/1/21, 2:49 PM), Envelope: no.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...? As the activities were open-ended in nature, [they created space for unexpected moments. I could not have predicted what would happen. This added an element of anticipation and fun to the conference. Also, I really felt a sense of community.](#) We played together at a distance but I did not feel alone. I was not a separate entity. I felt like I was part of something bigger.

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...? [There are some things that get lost when playing together online. You do feel slightly more detached from the other people in the 'room'. Your mind cannot fill in the missing details. \(go to Summary\)](#) There is less that you can physically connect with. You cannot see your playmates in their entirety. It definitely helped that it was encouraged to keep mics and videos on. This gives a glimpse into your playmates lives. But it still remains a glimpse. [The more 'personal' people became \(by sharing stories or expressing themselves through their creations\) the more I felt I could connect with them.](#)

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...? This is a three-layered perspective and I believe that it is helpful. You first put yourself in the shoes of the learner and experience the activity. [You then half multiple ways to reflect on your experience as a learner.](#) Then, you reflect on this process as a researcher. This gives all a common ground. Everyone has had the same shared experience. I find this helpful.

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...)? I saw some thumbs up to communicate that all was in order. I also noticed nodding to express your agreement

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own? I found it difficult to be inspired by others. I noticed that I was more engaged in parallel play (playing together at a distance). I felt that I shared a communal space and was part of something bigger but I did not peek over so much to find inspiration from others. I was more engaged in my own zone while listening to others talk. [Also, it was only when I saw the Padlet that I really started to understand what others were engaged in. Before, it was a bit difficult to follow \(apart from Scratch, as there the sharing of screens makes it easier to follow\).](#)

Anything else you want to share with us?

respondent 21/21 (submitted 2/4/21, 10:43 AM), Envelope: yes.

1) Now that the conference is over, how did this experience compare with other online conferences...? The focus of this conference was really different - [explore a certain subject - together.](#) The idea about the break-out session was great - to feel part of a group (peer). And the groupwork was the main focus

2) Now that you've had a chance to reflect on it, how did the experience of playing together online differ...?

It was more difficult to get the social conversation started - maybe it would have been useful with small icebreakers related to the competencies in focus in the workshop. Fx clap hands exercise (when you have to work with the small pieces in the contraptions :-)). More "silence" around the workspace - you was able to set up your own, but also manage to tap in and out in order to your own workflow. Impossible to get a physical helping hand - I could have used it several times :-).

3) We structured this conference around having a shared experience, reflecting on it as learners, and...? I like the cascade model of the trying/sharing and reflection. In the beginning everybody is in "same boat" but the directions opens throughout the process. Technical the paths can be too different because of peoples different backgrounds; are you practical oriented or more theoretical? (researcher/educator), how do you approach the participants (by/with and so on). Often is essential to discuss with people with other background/experience as your self in order to think out of the box. I don't think it was an issue in this workshop, but if we had to dig deeper it could be challenging - one domain/paradigm could have been dominant or the discussion just in the surface.

4) Did people use non-verbal communication strategies (e.g. hands, movements, materials, songs...)? Actually I didn't recognized much non-verbal communication. We focused on the subject - in shadow remix we saw each others "workplace" and at scracth we shared screens often. And because we were a group of people, peoples webcams were small at my screen, so it was also difficult to see and also be aware off non-verbal communication - it was mostly sound/talk that got me to look up meanwhile I was "working", so maybe the was some non-verbal communication. And if I turned off the sound sometimes...

5) During the activities, were you inspired by other's ideas or projects in a way that changed your own? I was inspired by the others, but often I just got to know about their ideas by the end of the workshop, so I didn't have time to "change" my own. Being physical together it's easier to get inspired - and embarrassed. But in the ideation phase we didn't exchange that much - I think. It was more at the end - by showing each others contributions.

Anything else you want to share with us?

It was really inspiring for me. Got me to think about the great role the facilitator plays, and that it's necessary to have a technical supporter to help with technical issues, so everybody don't have to wait if someone fx can't access. We also need to be aware of the context - everybody has been working from home for several weeks/months. And many of us feel a lack of "BEEING together" with someone else (than our own household), so I also think it might affect the great atmosphere a bit. How would it have been - if we have been back to work for several months? Maybe the PLAY together would have been stronger? Or maybe not? At least I think it ment something special, that most of us attend from our private houses ([go to Summary](#)).