Perspectives on Playful Leadership

Thoughts, reflections and approaches from developing higher education playful learning in Denmark

Teachable Machine and Jamboard 1

Jamboard-link: shorturl.at/lDNOT

Programme Leadership in PL+

A shared foundation of four connected pillars:
- PlayLabs - physical spaces designed for playful teaching, testing and developing
- Experiments with playful approaches - in day-to-day teaching and to develop a repository of playful designs
- Competency development - capacity building through national seminars and local/institutional action learning
- A 'didactic' basis of principles, play qualities and development approaches
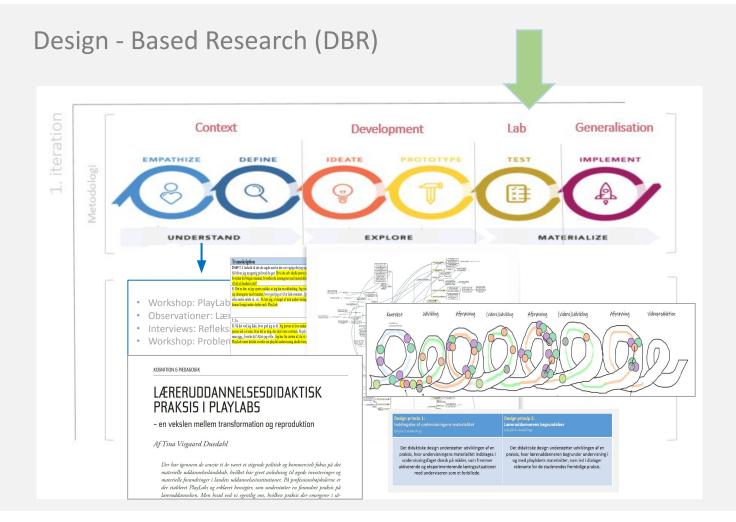
However, each university college approaches leading and developing playful learning differently through cultural, historical and educational - and that is part of a 'plastic and dynamic' leadership approach

Design Leadership

- All research in Playful Learning DK is originally intended as Design-Based Research emphasising close developmental relationships between research and practice
- In the playful learning programme, DBR is - among other things - play experiments with educators/for students to lead playful innovations of educational practices
- Innovations might be changes in practice, designs for learning, learning models, curriculum designs and so forth
- Developing and implementing design principles as soft leadership (guidance more than leading)
- However, playful design leaderships is approached very differently...

Experimental (and Dialogic) Collaborations

- Developing epistemic partnerships (enacting developmental partnerships in education design as meetings of equals moving towards diverse, generative collaborations)
- Approaching joint problematisation (emphasis on shared questioning of the world around us)
- Searching for the numerous voices present influencing each other - the polyphony of playful learning (and other complex topics/concepts)
- 'Dialogic Space' (concept from Rupert Wegerif) is about opening up, broadening and deepening the present voices (both personal/human and textual/material)
- Experimenting with ideation and design of teaching and learning through construction play and speculative design/design fiction

Design - Based Research (DBR)

PlayLab & Classroom Leadership (materials/spaces)

- Materials and spaces guides over ways of doing, knowing, collaborating - and leading. Playful leadership might not only be personal, but also material and spatial.
- Materials, artefacts, things, objects etc. guides (playful) leadership - and so does spaces, surroundings, environments etc.
- For example, in the Danish PlayLabs, the material surroundings influence project and classroom management of HE playful learning in tangible ways.

Leading Uncontrollability and the Amorphous

- Playful learning is as a concept fluid, dynamic, plastic and ambiguous. So how might we as leaders, designers or practitioners lead the amorphous? How might we lead for uncontrollability?
- Hartmut Rosa, German sociologist and philosopher, argues, that we - as a society and individually - routinely searches for control in all aspects of life, but that we experience resonance - vibrating meetings and experiences - in the uncontrollable aspects of life. He argues, that somewhere in-between - the semi-controllable - we'll find a meaningful middleground.
- A related argument is made by danish existential philosopher, KE Løgstrup, that we often long for the amorphous - but actually thrive in structures.
- Leading playful learning might be focused on the middle ground - shared conceptions/foundation to promote diversity and multiplicity in development.

Ponder and Wonder

- An activity about exploring/investigating the beautiful and ugly sides of playful leadership - and how playful leadership can be understood in present and future perspectives.
- Using Jamboard, we'll being with describing the ugly (i.e. the worst, uncomfortable, ridiculous, meaningless aspects) and the beautiful (i.e. the best, most wonderful, hopeful, relevant, productive aspects)
- We'll continue with exploring what characterises playful leadership today - in the present, and tomorrow - in the near or distant future.
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Discussion and Perspectives

- Embodied explorations and creative-communicative explorations → do they provide different perspectives on playful leadership? Something new or interesting to take with us?
- Arranging material/spatial surroundings to guide playfulness? → how might we design space for playful leadership?
- Configuring or re-configuring boundaries? → how might we reconfigure boundaries for playful leadership? Or how might playful leadership enable configurations of new boundaries? Or for classroom leadership and the relations between teacher and students?