

COLLABORACADEMY: DEVELOPING AN EXPERIENTIAL AND LANGUAGE-BASED APPROACH TO 'LEARNING TO COLLABORATE' IN SIX CONTEXTS

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Abstract

Collaboration is positioned a catch-all mode for addressing critical societal and environmental challenges. However, few people are prepared for the complexities a collaborative way of working presents once reaching the critical point of contribution. However, despite prioritising collaboration, the question of HOW to collaborate is rarely asked and even less so effectively answered and resourced. The types of collaboration needed in high-level systems change and transformational research are under-prioritised at all educational levels. In 2024 a transdisciplinary research network – The Future Fibres Network+ – was established with UK Research & Innovation funding, aiming to foster collaboration between environmental science and the textiles and clothing industry to tackle textile and clothing's environmental impacts. This paper presents the key findings from a study funded through the network, which aimed to develop a draft syllabus for 'learning to collaborate'. The theoretical underpinning for the approach is grounded in situated learning, participatory and co-design, and action research. The study supported the three assumptions behind the training approach but also revealed some new opportunities, challenges and tensions. The results were further explored through the development of combinational teaching units and by imagining how tensions and benefits might manifest in six imagined scenarios. The main findings relate to six meta themes or 'core principles': Language focus; Systemic co-creation of topic knowledge; Experiential co-learning; Diversity of knowledges; Common learning units; Individual practice blueprint.

Keywords: Collaboration, practice, language, pedagogy, systems thinking, situated learning.

1 INTRODUCTION

Emphasis in scientific research has started to shift from the traditional modes of 'discovery' bounded by the conventions of one discipline, towards the translation of scientific knowledge into impactful societal, industrial and environmental interventions. So-called 'mission-oriented research' involves responsible research and innovation projects that respond to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [1] [2], requiring a marriage between fundamental science and applied research [3] within inter- and trans-disciplinary teams.

Addressing complex challenges not neatly falling into one discipline or another, such as sustainability, requires a systemic approach to unearth the entanglements between disciplinary knowledges and different parts of the system, to better understand the variation in perspectives and how a reconfiguration of elements might improve the system goals and outputs. Collaboration between diverse academic partners [4] [5], and with non-academic system actors becomes even more important when implementing interventions [3] [6] [7] [8]. However, inter- and trans- disciplinary (ITD) collaboration of the necessary scale and speed does not occur naturally [14]. Without a clear methodology for collaboration, or adoption of collaborative practices, 'chasms' can appear between areas of knowledge and activity that are interdependent, resulting in poor project outputs and outcomes [6].

The design field is well-equipped to support coordinated and collaborative effort, mutual understanding and systemic innovation [8] [9] [10] [11] [12] [13]. There is a wealth of collaborative design (co-design) expertise, tools and methods within the design community, a growing resource that could strategically serve the wider mission-oriented research effort.

However, access to learning about collaborative design approaches is limited, both within design education, where collaboration is taught within specialist design courses and often at MA rather than BA levels, and especially within the sciences. Moreover, ITD collaborative methods and approaches are not given a high importance in Continual Professional Development (CPD) courses or at strategic points where interdisciplinary collaboration is essential, for example in sustainability research and implementation (along with other complex mission-oriented topics). This can be during the preparation of ITD research bids, during partnership-forming and at the start of ITD projects [14].

1.1 The Future Fibres Network+

Within this context, the Future Fibres Network+ (FFN+) was established in 2024 with UK Research & Innovation funding. FFN+ aims to improve knowledge sharing and collaboration between environmental science, textile and fashion design and the wider circular clothing and textiles ecosystem, to find new opportunities to bring about a more sustainable industry. During two Town Hall events, academic and industry leaders discussed the state-of-the-arts and the remaining challenges. Key to these discussions was the need for systemic approaches, greater collaboration and more attention to education.

CollaborAcademy was one of six mini-projects funded through FFN+ to help the network progress this core mission. The project involved piloting an experiential approach to 'learning to collaborate'. CollaborAcademy had three-fold aims:

- a. to test the hypothesis that co-experience and a focus on language helps build collaborative skills.
- b. to test tools developed by design researchers during previous research and teaching projects.
- c. to elucidate features for a syllabus for learning to collaborate to further disseminate the approach and build a pathway to implementation and impact.

Although the authors use the term 'syllabus', a fully worked up and detailed syllabus for immediate implementation was not possible within the scope of the mini project. Rather the project involved scoping the features of such a syllabus and the value-proposition in the form of 6 scenarios incorporating 7 core principles and 5 teaching units. Adding detail to the teaching units was out of scope and is reserved for future development. This paper presents the main findings from the CollaborAcademy project.

1.2 Approach and Rationale

The approach taken in CollaborAcademy is based on the idea that collaboration is a practice, and 'learning to collaborate' is most effective whilst collaborating [14] [15] [16]. This is a fairly commonplace approach in education but is greatly limited by the cohort available within the educational setting. For example, at UAL BA students undertake a collaborative unit which helps them to learn collaborative skills by working with students from other BA courses from the school or college, all of which are creative disciplines such as illustration, spatial design, fine art, textile or graphic design. Similar approaches are reported from, for example, biochemistry faculty [17] [18]. This approach limits the potential for learning ITD collaborative practices, because the difference between disciplinary roles is less clear, and the orientation to a central subject for investigation is more difficult to synthesise. These topics will be developed in the discussion.

Furthermore, there are three assumptions derived from the researchers' previous work. The first assumption is that people learn to collaborate when they experience something together. This has been observed for example when project partners attend dinner together at a consortium meeting, when they have boundary objects (such as materials samples) to anchor their knowledge and discussions, or when they visit the laboratories or factories of their collaborators. While this can include experience online, as has been reported by other authors, where feasible in-person experience is more effective for maximum social interaction and rapport [19] [20]

The second assumption is that focusing on language is central to understanding and reconciling difference within a partnership, be that disciplinary, cultural or any other difference that manifests in language, communication, and ultimately misunderstanding. Previous co-design research involved co-creating glossaries with partners to foreground misunderstandings that may come from codified language used by different disciplines that can be slow to emerge, causing irreparable damage to trust and understanding. Without a specific focus on language, these fundamental building blocks of communication may never be shared. Holding a space for developing a shared understanding of key terms and nuanced understandings in different contexts also provides the opportunity to learn about one another's differences.

The third assumption is that adopting a systems view, and improving systems literacy, is connected to collaborative literacy; the two appear as if codependent in transformative research. This is perhaps because an awakening to the complexity of a system and the multiple perspectives nestled within, leads to a realisation that ITD collaboration is essential and therefore greater investment in the collaborative journey, and sacrifice of ones' individual goals [18]. For example, if you want to change the food system, a systemic perspective allows you to understand that several stakeholders with diverse perspectives and values will need to change their activities, such as the retailer, the farmer, the logistics company,

and the person buying the food. To work with each of these system actors requires collaboration, and the integration of diverse knowledges and values. By adopting a systems view partners start to see the purpose of the collaboration and their role within it, then they can invest the effort and trade-offs required for the collaboration to succeed. Collaborating with diverse system actors requires different methods, skills and processes than conventional research methodologies [15], and represents a paradigm shift in the way research is conceptualized and conducted.

The theoretical underpinning for this approach comes from situated learning, participatory design and action research. Udoewa discusses the amount of participation in a collaboration through a typology of participation, which seeks to subvert conventional notions of power and agency in 'teamwork' [22]. Furthermore, by adopting an action research approach, the research team sought to 'co-evolve' the challenge space through the research process [21]. This form of design research is typically exploratory and aims to test, iterate and implement interventions simultaneously, rather than focusing on conducting experiments and gathering data that might be reproducible or generalisable.

This rationale guided the development of a participatory study to co-design a syllabus for collaboration, described in the next section.

2 METHODOLOGY

The study involved recruiting 12 doctoral researchers from the approximate fields of environmental science, textiles engineering and fashion design. Doctoral researchers were chosen because they are situated in a formal educational mode, having time dedicated to the pursuit of skills development and are aligned to the goals of FFN+, within which the study is situated, with a focus on collaborating within an ITD research scenario.

A toolkit was curated by the design-based research team, comprising some tools that had previously been developed for the collaborative unit at UAL, alongside new tools that were seen as important to scaffold the field trip learning and activities (Fig 1). The research team onboarded the participants through an online workshop to introduce the study process and the toolkit. Four mixed discipline groups were defined, each with three participants. The selection was largely made according to geographic location, to make it easier to travel to a common location for the field trip. Other factors considered were common interests and disciplinary mix, although this didn't come into play as much as it may have without the geographic limitation or a larger cohort to select from.

Over six weeks, the participants met online to select a field visit location to co-experience a common site related to the topic, coordinated their visit and 'prepared to collaborate using the toolkit. During the field trip the groups completed two tasks using the toolkit. The teams then co-presented their experience in an online workshop, where they also co-identified the key features of a 'learning to collaborate' syllabus. A 'draft syllabus' was synthesised from the findings which was then presented for stakeholder feedback in the FFN+ Town Hall and with an industry and academic panel. Table 1 outlines the key activities of the study which informed a syllabus draft.

The image shows two worksheets from the CollaborAcademy Toolkit. The first worksheet, titled 'OUR COLLABORATIVE MANIFESTO', contains introductory text about collaborative agreements and a table with five columns: DIFFERENCE, EXPECTATIONS, ROLES, LEARNING, and CARE & EQUITY. The second worksheet, titled 'OUR GLOSSARY', has two columns: WORD and MEANING, both with multiple rows for notes.

DIFFERENCE	EXPECTATIONS	ROLES	LEARNING	CARE & EQUITY
EMERGENCE	COMMUNICATION	RELATIONSHIPS & TRUST	PREPARATION MONITORING REFLECTION	DECISION-MAKING

Figure 1: Two worksheets from the CollaborAcademy Toolkit, developed to support the participants in preparing to collaborate

Table 1: Research process and participatory activities

	Activity		Participants	Data gathered	Key emerging themes
Curation of the toolkit from existing teaching resources developed by the team, and new resources; Participant recruitment					
27 Jan – 10 Feb	Participant briefing workshops		PhD student participants recruited	Work spaces, field research sites, materials used, labs	Environmental science, Textile technology and Design ways of working for circularity
Participants prepare to collaborate: online planning of field trip using the toolkit					
30 Mar – 21 Apr	Field trips		PhD student participants	Terminologies, audio, field reports, photographs	Different disciplines use and understanding of same terms i.e. microfibre.
Participants reflect on their experience and complete the presentation template together					
1 May	Syllabus workshop		PhD student participants	Feedback on toolkit, methods used, what worked what didn't.	Reflections on personability of collaboration, accounting for time
Research team analysis and synthesis of participant data into draft syllabus					
3 June	Townhall presentation	Industry, Academics, Researchers, PhD student participants	Postcards with feedback for further applications, expansion		Need for more filling of the gaps between industry, academics and research in the area. Need for more spaces where this can occur
4 June	Academic and Industry workshop / Final focus group		Industry Professionals, Academics, Funding body professionals, PhD participants	Feedback during and after via email on courses useful to each sector	Collaborative frameworks: Systems thinking, visual scenario planning, and interdisciplinary methods
Research team collate and analyse feedback data to arrive at proposal of 7 core principles, 5 teaching units and 6 scenarios for CollaborAcademy					

At each stage the data was reviewed and discussed by the research team to inform the next stage. The audio from each workshop and presentation was analysed and coded for key themes emerging from the research. The research team kept a collaborative analysis and sense-making space on an online platform (MIRO) for the purposes of developing the syllabus and framework presented below.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Participant Presentations

During their presentations participants reported that the online preparatory phase of field trip was crucial for success during the in-person part of the process, as one participant explains:

"I think one of the really good things about having these initial meetings, is that we'd already kind of built a working relationship, so sometimes it can be quite awkward when you meet people for the first time." [Participant A]

Preparing well for their collaboration enabled the participants to be more open to different perspectives when meeting in-person:

"We had a very sort of fluid outlook of other disciplines as well, and I think that that was to do with meeting up so frequently beforehand, we tend to have more kind of be more accepting to others viewpoints: [Participant C]

As anticipated, the experiential mode of learning was effective for fostering collaborative skills and mindsets. The participants learnt about one another, about themselves, and about the topic but from different angles:

"We found that this experience really helped us to breakdown those stereotypes. So, I think often design is seen as a more creative subject, whereas science is more factual. However, we found that that that's not actually always the case." [Participant C]

One of the strongest themes related to role of language and how the experience had allowed participants to break down barriers to understanding. The participants were guided towards focussing on language, so their attention to this topic is perhaps not surprising, but the evidence also highlights that they found it be an important feature of their learning experience:

"There were a lot of different wordings that we didn't understand. So we had to ask Participant C quite a lot. Because there's different like anagrams and different words for different things." [Participant B]
"And likewise, lots of scientific terms that I had no idea about either." [Participant C]

The site of the field trip was also important, providing stimulus for collaborator interactions and systemic literacy (alternative system actor perspectives):

"I'm walking into Participant G's workspace. I was just blown away by the sheer scale of sock waste manufacture from manufacturing. That was something that I hadn't necessarily considered." [Participant H]

Across the participant presentations there was the suggestion that some participant/site combinations resulted in more evidence of learning how to collaborate than others. For example, the most diverse teams and/or those visiting relatively benign sites, such as one another's workspaces or exhibitions, led to a greater focus on the collaboration:

"We spent the best part of maybe one and a half to two hours filling out the manifesto and just discussing in real detail everything we kind of do and think about on a day-to-day. We then took a tour around the many different labs and kind of spread across the campus at Leeds [Participant H]

"What we learnt about each other was that our disciplines are very different and we have very different day-to-day life. So, from working in a lab, an office and then working outreach and communities of schools, it was all very different." [Participant B]

Where the group had a common interest in the site aside from the purpose of the study this created a distraction from the purpose of the field trip:

"I think unlike probably the other groups, the thing that sort of united us as a group immediately was actually that we all wanted to go to [factory site]. We weren't too particular in the beginning about what we wanted to do and [...] with the benefit of hindsight, we probably could have." [Participant F]

3.2 Syllabus Co-Design Workshop

Participants worked in teams to identify the key features of a Syllabus for CollaborAcademy based on their experiences. These were then clustered and summarized by the research team to form a 'draft syllabus'. The draft syllabus was then presented at the FFN+ Town Hall and at an Academic and Industry Panel for feedback to guide it's further development.

3.3 Town Hall & Industry & Academic Panel feedback

The combined feedback from stakeholders clustered around four key themes. First and foremost, the need for clear distinction between this training and existing offers, was a central point of discussion. Second, the tension between 'learning to collaborate,' the subject (sustainable fashion), and participants' other normative disciplinary and career priorities was seen as an area to further develop. Third, the uncertainty over cohort formation and synergy for meeting the learning outcomes was highlighted. Finally, resource (time and cost) was seen as a barrier to participation.

During the FFN+ Townhall, stakeholders welcomed the initiative and felt that collaboration could (and should) be learnt at various life stages from early years right through to professional training. They discussed how different learning modes could be used for educational stages, with challenges arising

from different educational contexts. Within the industry group, Intellectual Property (IP) was cited as a key challenge for industry participants, while the difficulty of cohort-forming and immaturity for 'teamwork' was a barrier at school and undergraduate level. The unpredictability of the disciplinary 'recipe' in course iterations was seen as a major risk factor with some incompatible combinations.

This feedback led to the decision to take a contextual approach to further develop the training, to apply the results with different combinations of features. Based on the study results, the research team developed: 1/ A set of 'core principles' for the CollaborAcademy approach; 2/ Modular teaching units that embody learning features seen as important to be applied in combination depending on the context; 3/ Distinct scenarios to elucidate the operability and value-basis of the CollaborAcademy proposition.

4 DISCUSSION

Setting out to develop a syllabus for collaboration, the study provided two crucial points of orientation. First, through the field trip and resulting co-developed syllabus, the participants were able to highlight the key features and topics they believe are important for learning to collaborate in their context. When we engaged stakeholders in the second phase of the study to provide feedback, this contributed questions of practicality and contextual appropriateness. At this point the research team recognised the need to position the key features identified by participants within the course content, leading to the development of 5 Learning Units. The benefits identified through the study provided insights into the most appropriate contexts to learn about collaboration, leading to the development of 6 scenarios. As the research team iterated and fleshed out the scenarios, a set of core principles for CollaborAcademy began to emerge. The discussion is structured into these three areas of pedagogic development, although it is worth noting that there are many interconnections between these three areas and the insights therein than it is possible to elaborate here.

4.1 Translating Key Features into Learning Units

The areas of delivery tested through the study were seen as effective by the participants; the focus on systems thinking (Table 2: Unit A) was clearly beneficial as a way of conceptualizing collaboration before developing the field trip (Table 2: Unit C). The focus on language as well as meeting and preparing online before the field trip was effective for building rapport and defining roles, and the toolkit, when used fully, achieved a better understanding of difference, self, and other. However, the study revealed some areas where additional learning units would be valuable, these are Units B, D and E in Table 2. While systems thinking formed an overarching position for the study, delivered as part of the preparatory workshops, participants identified this as a key feature of the draft syllabus. Meanwhile, a weakness of the approach taken in the study was the lack of consideration for how to balance the acquisition of knowledge about the topic (sustainable fashion) with learning related to collaboration. This was anticipated as a difficult balance from the outset, as attention can drift from learning about 'how to collaborate' towards the more familiar and interesting topic-related learning. To reconcile this area of tension, the research team added Unit B, which aims to use systemic mapping and co-design methods to unearth the topic knowledge within the cohort, thus simultaneously building topic learning through the collaboration. The role of those delivering Unit B is not as subject experts in this context, but as facilitators, and leans again towards participatory theory, in particular Udoewa's typology of participation in radical participatory design, which asks three pertinent questions "(i) Who initiates the work, and how much do they initiate? (ii) Who participates, and how fully do they participate? (iii) Who leads the process, regardless of participation, and how much do they lead?" [22]

Likewise, Units D & E respond to how the learning activity serves the participants, which is perhaps as much about market, implementation and feasibility as it is about learning to collaborate. One of the main benefits identified by participants and stakeholders was the potential for project and career development: pathways forwards from the CollaborAcademy experience. There are three interesting insights here: first that to collaborate effectively there needs to be the development of a specific 'project' which adds value, tangibility and specificity to the experience of collaborating. Second, that through the experience, participants are naturally developing networks that could lead to potential partnerships. Third, that rather than ceasing a potentially interesting collaborative project when the course ends, there could be further support to develop promising projects through incubation or mentoring. Units D & E therefore, emerge as a 'nice-to-have' continuation of Unit C, although may not be appropriate for every cohort and every scenario.

Table 2: Proposed Learning Units

	<i>Delivery Characteristic</i>
Unit A Systems & Collaboration	Introduction to socio-material systems, their importance for innovation and solving complex challenges, and their relationship to multi-actor collaboration Introduction to the challenges of ITD collaboration and how they might be addressed through learning 1-2 hours online (free)
Unit B Subject Deep-Dive	A co-design workshop to explore knowledge of the topic from within the cohort. Teaching delivery is via facilitation rather than topic knowledge. Topic knowledge is mapped to reveal the system as envisaged by the cohort and gaps, to reveal differences and topic focus. 2 x 3hr sessions online + hybrid or in-person
Unit C Field Trip	Preparatory online workshop to introduce the tools and methods for the field trip. Cohort-led organisation and attendance of the field trip including documentation of the top focus and the collaborative experience. Group report and individual blueprint. 2 x 3hr sessions online + 2 – 3 days in-person + 2 x 3hr sessions online
Unit D Project Build	Mentoring and incubation period to enable teams to develop promising project ideas 2 x 3hr sessions online / hybrid / in-person
Unit E Project Launch	Mentoring and support for implementing collaborative tools and methods within a real project, prior to launch Bespoke delivery / time as required

4.2 Translating Benefits into Scenarios

Following stakeholder feedback, the research team developed scenarios to imagine how recruitment, cohort development, the benefits identified, and the learning units might manifest in different contexts (Table 2). The most straightforward scenario to imagine was Scenario 2 relating to doctoral training, as this directly related to the experiences of the participants and could be delivered through existing doctoral training schemes or partnerships. A free online ‘taster’ is proposed for Scenario 1 in response to the stakeholder suggestion to make collaborative learning available to younger people (i.e. through ERIC) and to other sectors, as well as a concern over how to get exposure for the training, how to make it accessible, how to recruit and onboard potential participants.

Scenario 3 responds to the skills gap identified by the participants relating to their ability to build ITD partnerships: in this way they saw the potential value of the training in preparing them for this important part of their research career development. In addition to being of benefit to early career researchers and doctoral students, stakeholders felt that the training could be of benefit for ITD teams involving staff at all stages of their careers and in professional as well as academic roles within universities (Scenario 4). This picks up on the evolving strategy of the Research Excellence Framework in the UK and broader funding policy towards a diverse ‘team’ approach to research value.

Although the idea of ‘learning to collaborate’ was well received by industry stakeholders, imagining a scenario for this type of training was more challenging. Issues around Intellectual Property, time and resource were raised as being significant barriers. However, one possibility might be to offer the training to existing or emerging academic-industry partnerships around a key topic area that necessitates collaboration (Scenario 5).

Finally, Scenario 6 draws attention to the transferability of the course modules to a bespoke training offer where, for example, diverse collaborators need to work together on a mission-oriented topic requiring a systemic framing. This might include policy-makers, local government, citizen communities (and their representatives), industry and academia. In this context collaboration is especially challenging and preparing to collaborate would be of great value to the project success. As each context is different, the training would be created for the context, whilst drawing on the CollaborAcademy Units and toolkit.

Table 4: Six Scenarios for Learning to Collaborate

	<i>USP</i>	<i>Cohort Building</i>
1: Introduction to Systemic Collaboration	Free online ‘taster’ for entry-level understanding of how systems-thinking and collaboration are interconnected, how collaboration can benefit from a systems-view and visa-versa.	For everyone age 16+ Units: A
2: Doctoral Training	Training for PhD Researchers in approaches to interdisciplinary collaboration. Delivered through a partnership between several academic institutions who benefit from complimentary disciplinary expertise to a common topic (such as environmental sustainability of textiles and fashion)	Through a formal inter-institutional partnership Units: A B C
3: Partnership-building for Emerging Researchers	Focusing on collaboration as a means to understand how to build and sustain partnerships for inter- or trans-disciplinary research funding bids	From within one or more universities who commission the training to support CPD, Concordat or HREiR accreditation (UK) Units: A B C D
4: Intra-Institutional (academia)	Training to support inter- and trans- disciplinary collaborative skills and culture within an academic institution	Commissioned and recruited by the institution to support their KE, Impact and fundraising capacity Units A B C D
5: Industry-Academic Partnerships	Focused on supporting established KE partnerships between an academic institution and an industrial / community partner	Commissioned and recruited by the institution or industry partner to support their KE and impact activity, to help identify new collaborative opportunities Units A B C D E
6: Advanced Tailored Partnerships	Tailored collaboration to support specific needs of a multistakeholder project, idea or research for local councils, policy makers, industry and academic institution.	Commissioned and recruited via multiple channels of the institution, industry partner, local councils, government and policy makers Units A B C D E

4.3 Defining Core Principles

The process of scenario-building and imagining, led the research team to identify some meta themes, articulated as core principles for the CollaborAcademy approach which apply to all scenarios:

1. Language focus
2. Systemic co-creation of topic knowledge
3. Experiential co-learning
4. Diversity of knowledges
5. Common learning units
6. Individual practice blueprint

The first three of these are linked to the background research and previously described assumptions. 1/ The focus on language, which proved to be an effective mode of learning throughout the study. 2/ The systemic focus as a pedagogic framing for both the collaboration and topic was a central and valued feature of the training, so much so that the research team chose to strengthen this aspect of the syllabus. 3/ The field trip, which focussed on experiential co-learning, whereby the cohort’s collaborative learning was most effective because they were experiencing a place and reflecting on that experience together,

was also seen by participants as an essential feature that should be retained. Integrated into these three background principles, is the participatory and co-design approach which prioritises emergent knowledge codeveloped by the cohort, supported by the toolkit, facilitation and mentoring.

The study allowed the research team to identify three additional core principles: 4/ The 'recipe' for an effective CollaboraAcademy cohort, characterised by high differentiation between disciplines (or diversity of knowledges more broadly in the case of transdisciplinary contexts), and commitment to the meta 'topic' or mission (i.e. sustainable fashion). 5/ Delivery through common learning units which can be combined for different contexts and needs, therein supporting the feasibility and accessibility of the training whilst retaining the logic and key features valued by the study participants. 6/ The individual practice blueprint which has not been discussed so far and therefore warrants further explanation.

A central reflection of the research team centred around the intersectionality of the participants, who were not 'typical' according to their discipline. Rather the relational and reflective approach of CollaboraAcademy revealed a breaking apart of disciplinary conventions, a combining of their research and industry experiences, their personal beliefs, interpersonal or relational capacities. Taking the position that the makeup their whole person as a researcher affects their approach to collaborative practice. Coupled with this was the feedback from participants that regardless of the success of the tangible project used in the training, learners should leave the training with something tangible that they can apply in their specific context. This complexity of the individual learner, as well as the conceptualisation of collaboration as a practice, led the research team to develop the idea of an 'individual practice blueprint' as the main learning outcome and unit of assessment from the training. This was imagined to be a documentation of the journey taken by the learner, including reflections on their practice, how they used or adapted the toolkit, it's relevance for the context of work they return to and how they might address the collaborative challenges they may face.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The CollaboraAcademy study presents a rich participatory exploration into how a systems framing, a focus on language and experiential co-learning, could be delivered as training in 6 different scenarios. The participant experience and co-designed draft syllabus illuminated the key features seen as important by participants but also highlighted some challenges and shortfalls. Cohort-building, time and resource for this type of training is a challenge that remains and must be tested in each of the proposed scenarios. The balance between the primary purpose of the CollaboraAcademy – to learn how to collaborate – and the more highly valued learning opportunities relating to the topic and to learner career or project development pathways was largely resolved through the additional Learning Units B, D & E, and through scenarios where the value of learning to collaborate goes hand in hand with learners other priorities. Perhaps most importantly, the study provided greater understanding of the value of conceptualising collaboration as essentially connected to systems literacy, and as a practice that must be developed by individual learners in full consideration of their particular intersections and context of practice outside the learning environment. A next step for this research will be to elaborate and pilot the training within each scenario.

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