

# TEACHERLESS: THE FUTURES OF DESIGN EDUCATION

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Andrew Hladkyj

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Andrew Hladkyj 2019 MDes

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Andrew Hladkyj

Submitted to OCAD University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Design in Strategic Foresight & Innovation.

Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
April 2019

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# ABSTRACT

With the ever-growing disruption of education by technology and the trend toward self-directed and autonomous learning, how might we re-imagine legacy post-secondary design education in a “teacherless” society?

Through a human-centred examination of today’s educational environment, this Major Research Project (MRP) derives 20 aspirational motivations at the heart of an independent learning model. It reframes the disconnect between design academia and industry using an ’80s computer game and a Greek myth as fresh paradigms to uncover the value of strategic partnership, addictive learning, and platform-agnostic foundational training in preparing post-secondary design education for the future. This research offers four alternative worlds built around distinct sets of motivations and presents one in detail to illustrate a higher-value ecosystem of flexible locations, virtual spaces, and re-defined roles that empower tomorrow’s independent learner. Finally, a high-level road map outlines a stakeholder consultation and implementation plan (key activators, alliances, milestones, pitfalls, and metrics) to make this re-imagined world a reality.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my dear daughter Leah and my mother Katherine, for their extraordinary patience

Helen, Cherie, and Peter, for their sage advice

Melvyn, for his guidance and knowledge

Gillian, for her wisdom

Chris, for his inspiration

My dear SFI cohort, for their camaraderie

The OCAD University SFI faculty, for their infectious and passionate devotion to lifelong learning

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# INTRODUCTION

# BACKGROUND

As a designer, educator, and coordinator for Sheridan College’s Web Design Graduate Certificate Program, I have always been interested in how design is learned and how it will be learned in our rapidly changing environment.

With the ever-growing technological disruption of education (Gleason, 2017) and pedagogical trends toward self-directed and autonomous learning (Farkas, 2012), what will the currency and role of today’s design educator be in the not-so-distant future? How might these trends impact the value and values of future design graduates, particularly at Sheridan College?

In 1971, Ivan Illich showed formidable foresight in calling for “radical alternatives to school-centred formal education.” In his provocative tome *Deschooling Society*, he notes that “the inverse of school would be an institution which increased the chances that persons who at a given moment shared the same specific interest could meet—no matter what else they had in common.”

Today, hobbyist and social platforms like Pinterest and MeetUp, certainly radically different in tone and structure from traditional schools, are bringing together like-minded individuals and are learning platforms in their own right. Within formal education, shared online platforms allow students to

take part in online communities where they learn from and are evaluated by not only their peers but also external experts and knowledge networks. Thus, students today are armed with a diverse knowledge repository no longer limited to the instructor. Are we teachers, then, a dying breed? With independent educational platforms offering personalized, on-demand, and “just-in-time” learning (Gleason, 2017), will education (d)evolve into an institutionally determined algorithm?

To the educator’s defence, Illich also writes about the delight and surprise in unexpected questions and how “priceless” and “true” a partnership between master and pupil can be. Furthermore, access to educators, whether online or in person, reinforces the sense of common purpose among students, which, in turn, improves retention and enrolment, the Achilles heel of many Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

Along with my personal stake in shaping the future of design education at Sheridan College (I have been tasked with revamping the above-mentioned graduate certificate program), this unresolved tension between autonomy, community, and technology is the driving force behind my major research project (MRP) and its main question: *How might Sheridan College reimagine post-secondary design education in a “teacherless” society?*

# RESEARCH OVERVIEW

This MRP is anchored on the following objectives and methodologies:

## FRAME

Establish a technological and pedagogical “lay of the land” in the realm of higher education

<i>Build a knowledge base with breadth and depth of opinion on technology and pedagogy in tech-enabled higher education</i>	<i>Literature Review</i>	Conducted comprehensive baseline study of seminal works, academic papers, and canonical texts (including those from online journals, blogs, and technology keynotes) from thought leaders in the fields of education, technology, or both
<i>Glean insight on the current state of tech-enabled higher education and where it may be heading</i>	<i>Events</i>	Attended educational seminars with diverse stakeholders—educators, students, administrators, employers, and government representatives—to obtain opinions on innovating tech-enabled education
<i>Focus on understanding the current state of design education, the role of technology in design learning, and how design education might evolve</i>	<i>Expert Interviews</i>	Moderated eight semi-structured expert interviews with college-level design educators, government, administrators, a digital pedagogy specialist, practicing designers, and design students (both current and former) to place educational innovation in a design setting

Identify considerations for building a human-centred curriculum for online-enabled post-secondary design programs		
<i>Derive high-level motivations, tensions, and levers to inform curriculum design principles</i>	<i>Human-centred STEEPV (HCS)</i>	Applied STEEPV framework (Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political, Values) from a human-centred perspective to structure foundational research utterances into key themes

## REFRAME

Develop a new mental model for post-secondary design education

<i>Abstract deep-rooted, systemic issues in design education to uncover unconventional paradigms for program innovation</i>	<i>Causal Layered Analysis (CLA)</i>	Moderated two workshops with design educators and students (current and past) to reveal surface-level issues, sustaining conditions, cultural views, and an alternative image or narrative to inspire stakeholders to reassess their positions
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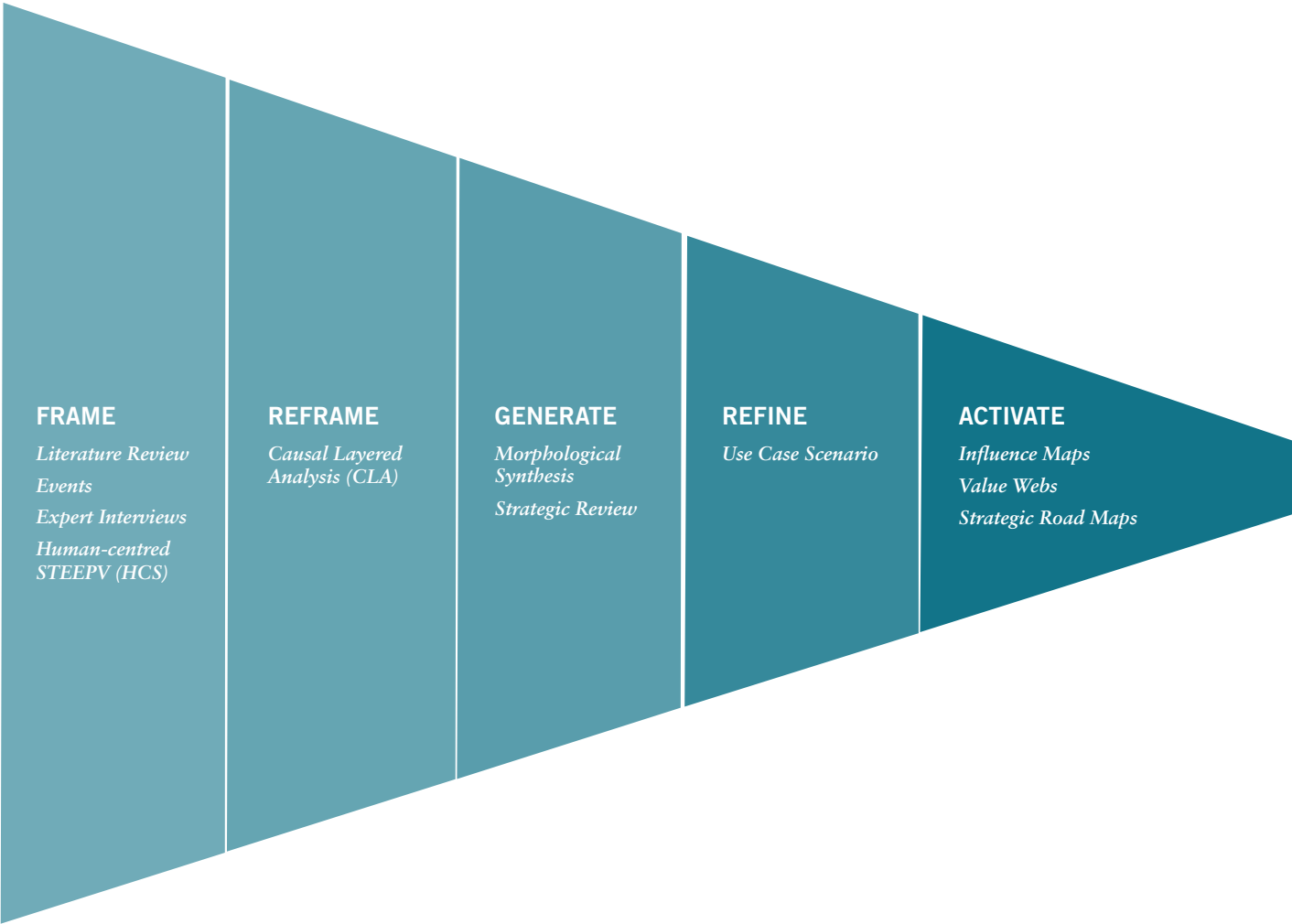


Figure 0.1: Overview of Research Methods

GENERATE

Create human-centred design program concepts to support a new paradigm

<i>Brainstorm alternative design learning territories based on aspirational motivations and gauge their potential to incite change</i>	<i>Morphological Synthesis</i>	Moderated four ideation workshops with design students and educators to “ladder up” from a new narrative and explore potential environments with unique combinations of derived program principles
	<i>Strategic Review</i>	Analyzed and ranked ideas by strategic fit from a design program provider’s point of view

REFINE

Unpack the winning program concept

<i>Visualize, empathize, and sympathize with learners operating within the reimagined design learning environment</i>	<i>Use Case Scenario</i>	Illustrated a “slice of life” through storyboards and crystallized benefits of the new system through contextual depictions of empowerment
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ACTIVATE

Set up the proposed design learning future for success

<i>Identify critical stakeholders to engage</i>	<i>Influence Maps</i>	Associated stakeholders with perceived involvement in human-centric design program outcomes or levers
<i>Envision new and modified sources of value to highlight opportunities and garner stakeholder attention</i>	<i>Value Webs</i>	Projected key stakeholder interactions and new, enhanced, or eliminated value exchanges under the proposed arrangement
<i>Build discipline and structure into the change management process</i>	<i>Strategic Road Maps</i>	Anticipated and distilled the rationale, impact, timing, and requirements of proposed future to maximize stakeholder cooperation

Methodologies are covered in greater detail within their respective phases. See Table of Contents and Appendices.

# SCOPE & LIMITATIONS

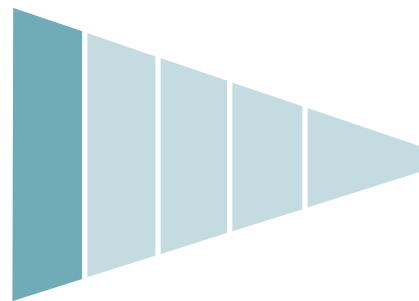
This MRP is as much about a compelling future as it is about putting forth a sound and replicable approach to envisioning and inspiring change in a design education setting. As such, it was necessarily pragmatic in shepherding insights through progressively tangible phases and acknowledges that other valid solutions exist with iteration. All qualitative methods (e.g. expert and user interviews, workshops) were designed to elicit highly informed perspectives rather than the full spectrum of opinion.

To optimize interviews, participants were given the opportunity to represent multiple points of view depending on their experiences. For example, recent graduates who now practise design were treated as equally credible contributors of both industry and post-secondary design education insights.

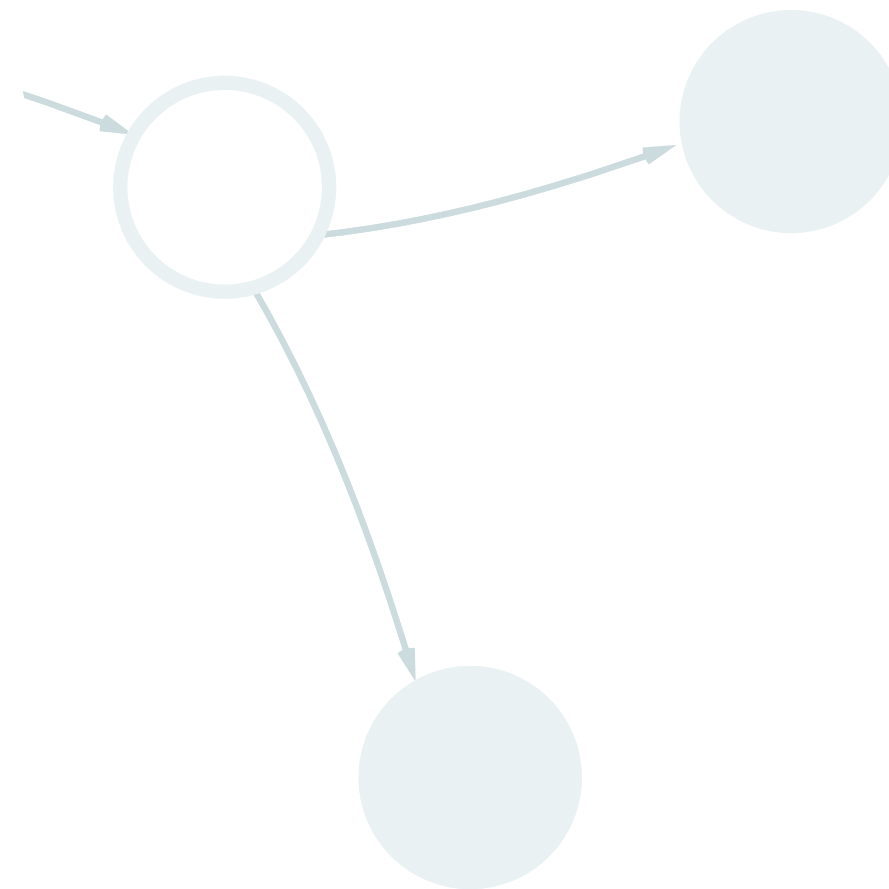
All interviewees and workshop participants were screened for consent, availability, and (for workshops) in-person appearance at a designated

central location. To accommodate restrictive mutual availabilities, Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) workshops were compressed into a two-hour intensive format and used an assigned but broadly accepted surface problem as a springboard for laddering down. Educators who took part in these workshops taught at the same institution as the researcher. Partly by design (i.e. the specific institution provided real-world context for change), this was also due to the limited pool of qualified external participants from which to recruit (e.g. professors who resided in the Greater Toronto Area and worked at other post-secondary, technology-led interaction design programs).

Lastly, this MRP expresses the author’s personal analysis and synthesis of the current and potential states of post-secondary design education. It is not a validation, critique, or rejection of the subject educational institution, its policies, management, and/or personnel.



PHASE 1  
**FRAME**  
DESIGN EDUCATION



# CONCEPTUAL BUILDING BLOCKS

What is the current state of post-secondary design education, and which key principles might inform its reimagination for an unpredictable future?

Using a Human-Centred STEEPV (Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political, and Values)

framework, Phase 1 of this research derives the conceptual building blocks (i.e. major themes, motivations, levers, and tensions) that will serve as foundational principles for a compelling redesign of post-secondary design education in Phase 3 of this document.



Given my goal of developing a Sheridan College technology curriculum anchored on humanistic values, I adapted the classic STEEPV framework to be more human-centred while keeping its thoroughness, re-focusing on experiences, relationships, and even perceptions between actants in the higher-ed space to yield deeper insights. As such, a political scan that would have

given rise to observations about government bodies and regulations, for instance, now speaks to organizational hierarchies, power relationships, and technology as a political artifact seen through the lens of students, instructors, and administrators.

Figure 1.1 outlines the adapted Human-Centred STEEPV process followed.

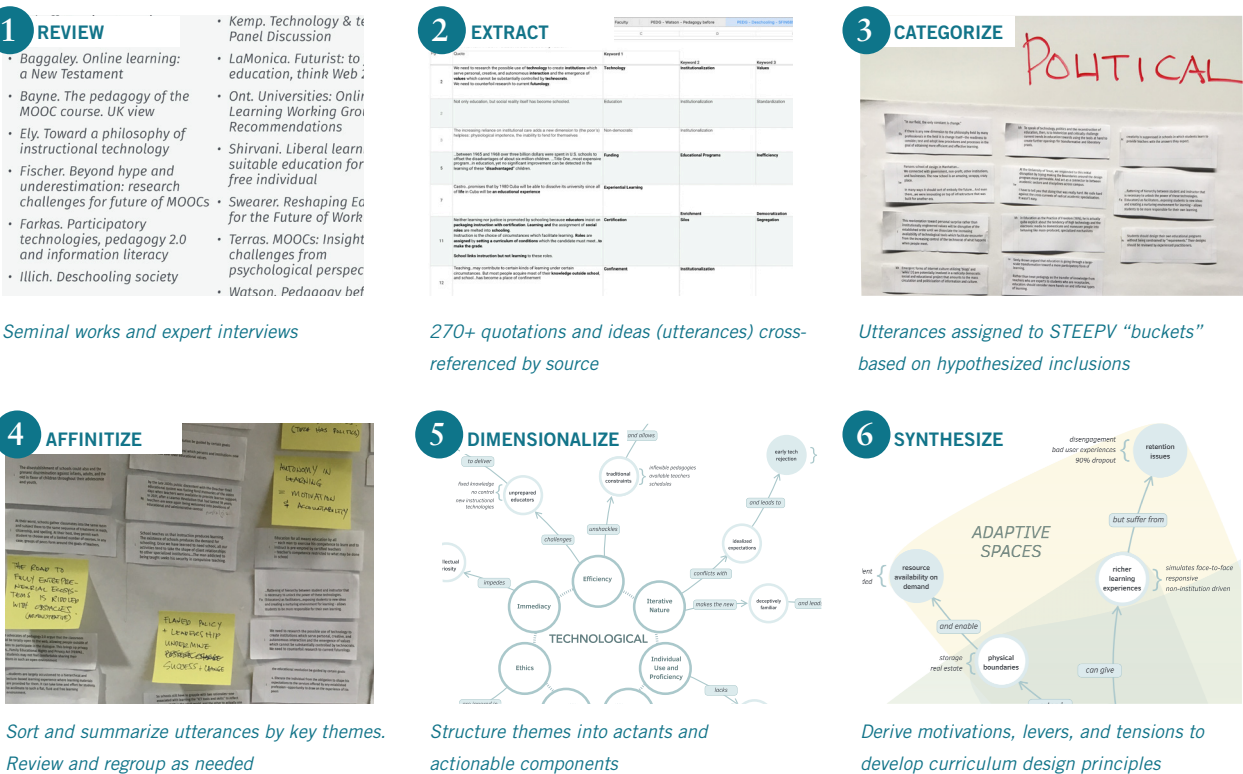


Figure 1.1: Human-centred STEEPV workflow

# SOCIAL

## People are more than demographics.

They are emotional beings who engage others and have their own desires, preferences, and personalities. This research uncovered five key social dimensions (Collaboration, Self-Selection, Public Opinion, Isolation, and Interactions) that drove the insights below.

### Online learning carries a social stigma

Negative educational user experiences and low retention rates (Terras & Ramsay, 2015) plague online schools and cast doubt on the quality of their instruction and credentials.

Equally (if not more) damaging, perceived lack of community or sense of the social (Lv., personal communication, August 5, 2017) as well as a sit-and-listen culture marked by forced participation and disengagement (Ch., personal communication, August 5, 2017) portray electronic course delivery and students as operating in a world devoid of interaction and nuance (Kemp et al., 2014), ultimately unfit for the workplace. This characterization extends to online course creators, who are labeled “instructional technologists,”

“engineers,” or “technicians” rather than respected “designers” or “architects” (Ely, 1999). Prophetically, Illich (1971) identified a “cultural bias of a society in which technological growth has been confused with technocratic control” (the latter associated with “bureaucracy and teaching” versus “independence and learning”).

The overall effect is a privileging of courses that are taught face to face, with the implied assumption that they are better, when this may not necessarily be the case (Kemp et al., 2014).

### Collaboration promotes transferable skills, employment

Skills do not develop in isolation. “Learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90).

This cooperative ideal is a common thread among various learning theories. Constructivism proposes that students actively build on their existing worldview and gain new knowledge by interacting



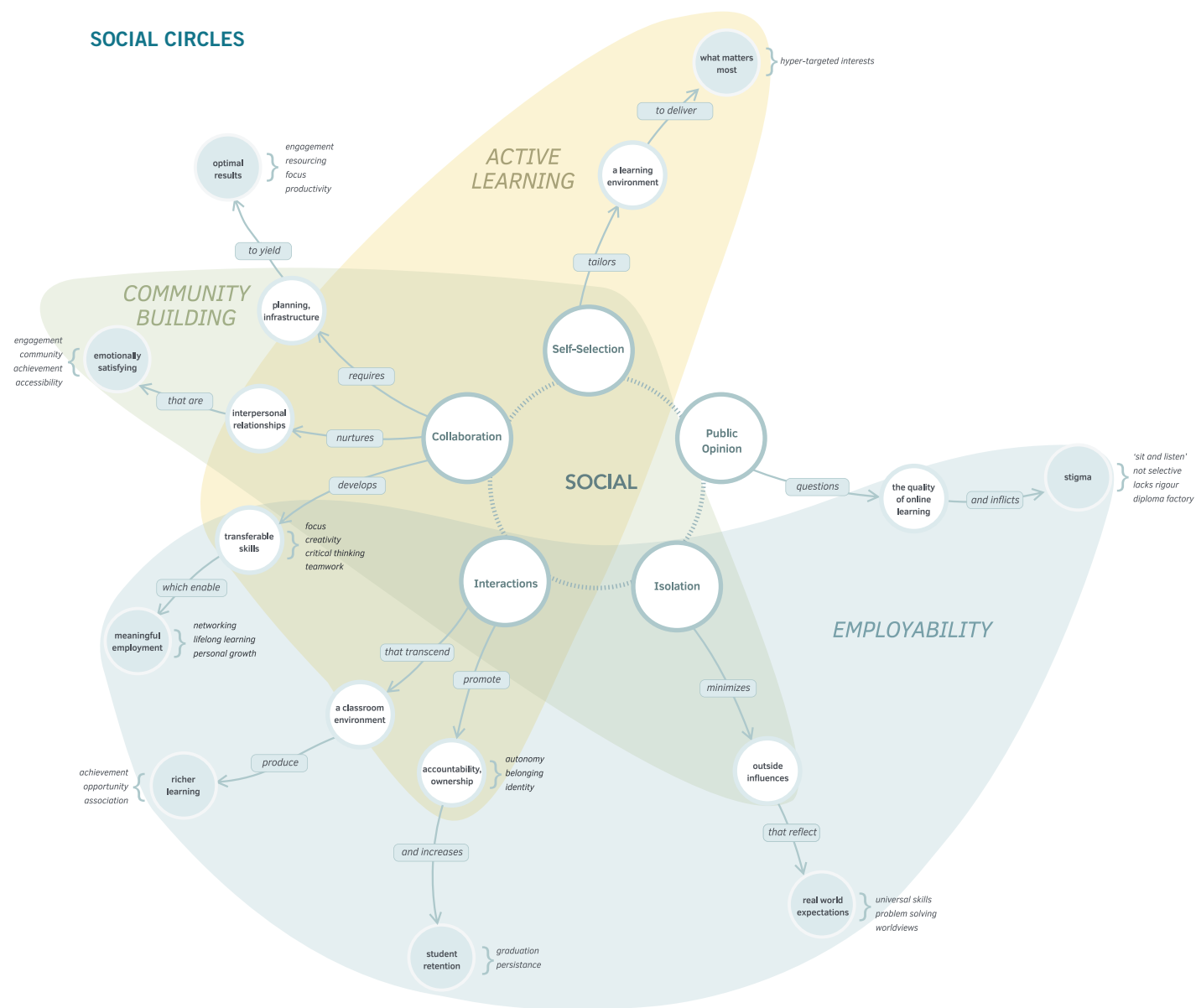


Figure 1.2: Social dimensions and motivations on which to base curriculum design

with peers and instructors. Connectivism espouses the greater importance of the quest for knowledge and rapid sense-making from networks compared with what one isolated individual currently knows (Farkas, 2012).

In practice, participatory technologies such as forums, blogs, and other content co-creation tools facilitate network-building and have been shown to hone

creativity, reasoning, focus, critical thinking, and analysis (Terras & Ramsay, 2015), all sought-after skills in the workplace.

Lastly, the interpersonal skills that arise from peer-to-peer learning are crucial to job seekers as employers increasingly demand teamwork and cultural fit from new hires. In part, this may explain why jobs elude even graduates of STEM

programs where learning is not necessarily about creativity and play (Swearer, 2017).

**Collaboration without planning, infrastructure yields sub-optimal results**

Collaborative efforts can fail when the right conditions and expectations are not present. Some students could be distracted or disengaged (Ma., personal communication, August 4, 2017), while others may not buy into participatory tools (Ch., personal communication, August 5, 2017; Manca & Grion, 2017; Yusop, 2017) and feel that their autonomy is curtailed by being forced to collaborate or use a technology meant only for their personal lives (Farkas, 2012). Traditional logistical or resource issues (e.g. classroom availability, scheduling) can also make collaboration more difficult.

Educators must first set the stage for collaboration to flourish by building a strong sense of community where students feel comfortable engaging and sharing knowledge online (Farkas, 2012) and modifying their practices such as how they evaluate students for collaboration (LaMonica, 2006) or communicate collaboration as a learning outcome (Farkas, 2012).

**Social interactions promote accountability, ownership of studies**

Whether on- or offline, students are more likely to commit to their studies when

they have opportunities to interact with others. Participatory technologies like blogs support autonomy by providing identifiable personal spaces from which students can contribute to a larger knowledge-building community (Farkas, 2012). By fostering a sense of belonging without sacrificing identity, online communities can boost learner persistence and achievement (Hughes, 2009) and promote sharing of one’s ideas in a space where conversation is king (Farkas, 2012).

*What is common to all true master-pupil relationships is the awareness both share that their relationship is literally priceless and in very different ways a privilege for both.*

Ivan Illich

Outside online spaces, direct relationships enable individualized feedback that helps keep students engaged in their studies (Terras & Ramsay, 2015). Face-to-face contact and impromptu after-class discussions with peers remind students that they have a personal obligation to others to complete group projects as promised (Kemp et al., 2014). How might these same benefits accrue to online learning settings where disengagement and dropout rates are high?

*Students can demonstrate their learning in an open way that allows for collaborative assessment, rather than simply receiving feedback from the instructor.*

Meredith Farkas

**Social interactions outside traditional environments promote learning**

The idea of learning outside the classroom is not a new one. A simple walk with students outside the classroom to practice their photography and receive immediate feedback can result in meaningful, teachable moments (Ma., personal communication, August 4, 2017).

Today, interactions are no longer tied to physical locations as Illich’s vision of learning driven solely by matched interests and peers becomes a reality. Online communities and tools facilitate virtual connections to crowdsource solutions to shared problems (Swearer, 2017), and the ubiquity of participatory media in all aspects of a person’s life has cemented the notion that “learning is no longer happening solely in the classroom, and the divisions between learning, work, and recreation are becoming increasingly blurred” (Farkas, 2012, p. 84).

**Interpersonal relationships are emotionally satisfying**

Much emphasis is placed on students’ intellectual growth and perhaps not enough on their emotional well being. If we accept that “students leave schools, they don’t leave communities” (Kemp et al., 2014), then accountability and commitment also rest on the fulfilment of emotional needs such as personal interactions and a sense of belonging.

A technical tool such as blogging can reduce students’ feelings of isolation while building an identity in the classroom (Dickey, 2004). It also lends itself well to more personal and informal writing, which leads to greater socialization (Farkas, 2012).

# TECHNOLOGICAL

## *Do technologies have politics?*

This research uncovered seven key technological dimensions (Digital Media, Efficiency, Ethics, Function, Immediacy, Iterative Nature, and Individual Use and Proficiency) that drove the insights below.

**Technology lacks emotional nuance**

Technology has yet to match the richness offered by face-to-face settings (Fischer, 2014). Subtle nuances (e.g. sarcasm, humour, body language) may not always translate well digitally, resulting in a watered down experience where instructors cannot be themselves or students misinterpret intent (Kemp et al., 2014). Technological innovation (e.g. greater connectivity, access to resources) aside, “human factor”-driven differentiators that can compete with the ease of smaller in-person classes and the relationships that develop within remain high on the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) agenda (Fischer, 2014).

**Technology is an extension of the person, not a replacement**

From blogs to wikis, innovative learning technologies facilitate content creation and sharing more efficiently than ever (LaMonica, 2006). Technology has also expanded

the reach of educators, allowing them to stay in contact with their students and work around logistical constraints (Kemp et al., 2014). On the cutting edge of this trend, artificial intelligence (AI) is being tested in more basic or screening roles such as an intelligent tutor (Fischer, 2014) or chatbot responding to questions that are frequently asked by students. This frees up the educator to participate in deeper and richer conversations that draw on their personal experiences and expertise (Swearer, 2017).

While the exact role of technology in education (e.g. standalone tutors, expressive tools of communication) has yet to be defined (Fischer, 2014), it seems that technology is, at best, the new TA for now.

**Technology is a means, not an end. Educational content, intent matter more**

Simply having access to the Internet or training educators to use computers is less important than educators’ effective pedagogic use of ICT (information and communications technology) to benefit learners (Watson, 2001; Ofsted, 2001).

Striking the right balance (and knowing the difference) between learning about technology and learning how to benefit from it

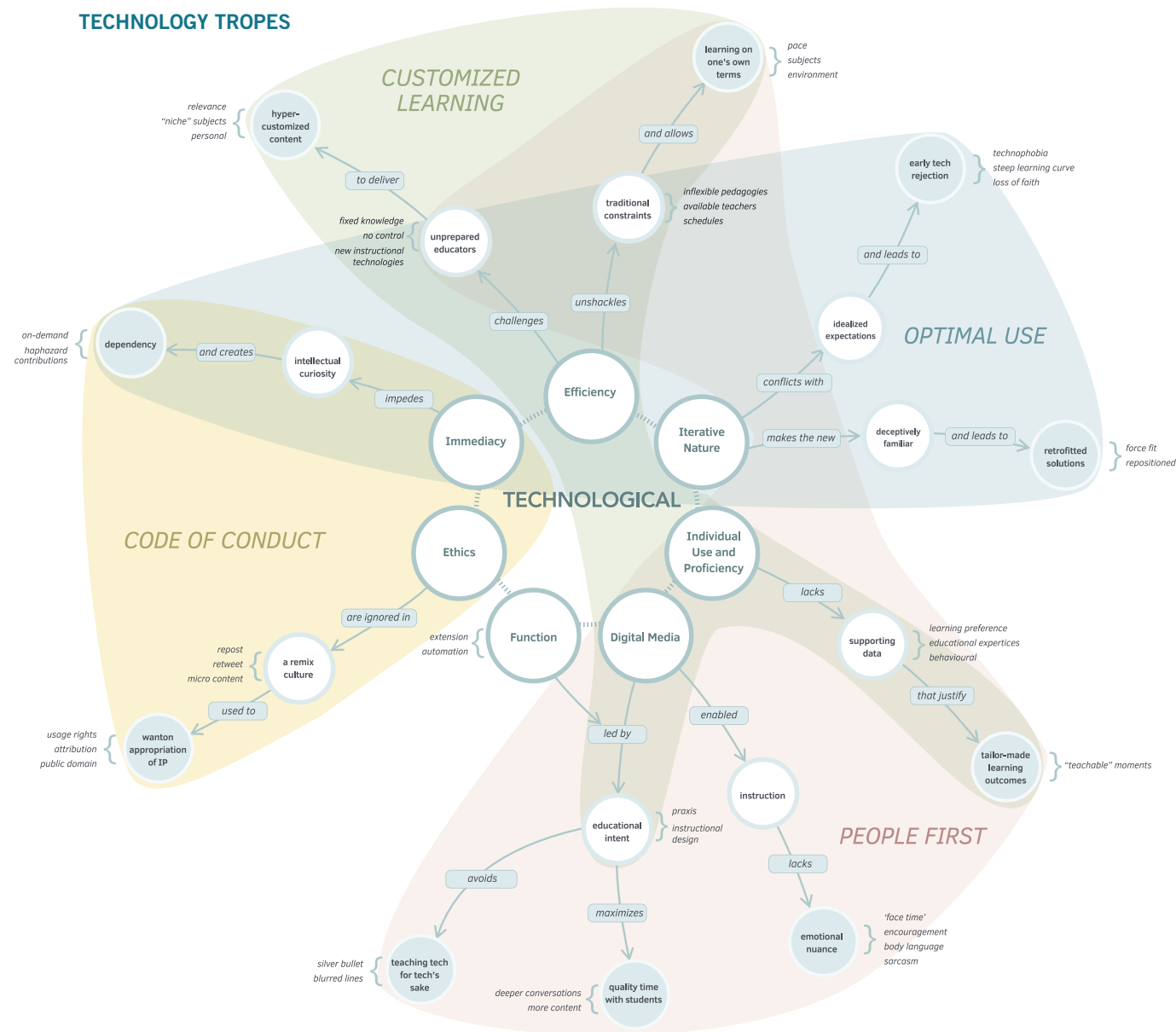


Figure 1.3: Technological dimensions and motivations on which to base curriculum design

(Fischer, 2014; Watson, 2001) has challenged educators since the turn of the millennium when U.S. and Canadian schools had widespread Internet access (NCES, 2002, p. 3; OECD, 2001, p. 256).

As growing evidence suggests, the use of instructional design process, not specific hardware and software, results in better learning outcomes (Ely, 1999). In educa-

tion, technology is not the silver bullet (Kemp et al., 2014).

**Tech’s experimental, iterative nature causes people to underestimate its potential to effect meaningful change**

New technologies have a long history of being treated like Trojan horses. Socrates dismissed the written word, fearing it would force students to follow an argu-

ment rather than participate in it. He did not foresee “new pathways for the intellect” as his student Plato did (Shirvani, 2015, para. 6). Similarly, early MOOCs were poorly received as many assumed that their initial, primitive feature sets and the platform itself would not evolve over time. As today’s hyper-connected economy sees innovation cycles shorten and steepen (McGowan & Araya, 2016), new technological uses and contexts soon arise that demonstrate the true value of iterations, be they games used ex-curriculum to identify unusual talent in children otherwise labelled antisocial by school psychologists (Illich, 1971) or Facebook’s pivotal role in the Arab Spring (Kemp et al., 2014). While it may be too early to expect online course delivery to be the answer to education for everyone, it may also be too soon to completely abandon them (Kemp et al., 2014).

**Little is known about students’ personal learning styles, how they actually use technology to learn**

Having a fine-grained understanding of how and why students interact with technology to learn is a prerequisite to addressing the practical and psychological barriers in e-learning (Terras & Ramsay, 2015). Notwithstanding, educators grapple with obtaining this knowledge for a variety of reasons.

They may not be asking the right question when focusing on “What should someone

learn?” instead of “What kinds of things and people might learners want to be in contact with in order to learn?” (Illich, 1971).

For example, learning curves for some technologies can be so steep that they take time away from actual learning (Ruth and Houghton, 2009). Yet educators may not always be aware of this dichotomy as they deliver content. The sheer size of MOOCs also challenges the feasibility of understanding

*Technology is certainly not a silver bullet. How the tools are utilized makes all the difference in the world.*

John Preston

individual students and creating a learning path in advance that factors in a diverse (and likely unknown) range of competencies and technological literacies (Farkas, 2014).

While the use of big data and simple surveys of students’ learning preferences and experiences have been suggested as means of shaping instructional strategy (Kemp et al., 2014; Terras & Ramsay, 2015), students’ emotional and cultural relationships with technology and each other may prove harder to uncover. When collaborative wiki sites were first used in schools, for instance, students felt uncomfortable with the idea of

editing each other’s work, and only after a strong sense of community and friendships in the classroom developed did collaborative writing emerge as intended (Farkas, 2012).

**Educators are unprepared for the autonomous, customized learning that technology affords**

When technology futurist John Seeley Brown argued that educators must change their teaching practices to make each new piece of technology work (LaMonica, 2006), one wonders if they were tempted to change professions given the already-high demands of teaching with existing technology and online course instructors’ complaints of having “little to no control over the scope and sequence of the syllabus, texts chosen, assessments created, and pacing of the material” (Kemp et al., 2014, p. 6). With predefined roles and areas of expertise, educators struggle to establish their relevance amidst MOOCs’ obvious targets: self-motivated students who feel responsible for their own learning and have Netflix-esque micro-genres of interest (Fischer, 2014; Swearer, 2017; Ely, 1999).

**Technology makes it easier to appropriate intellectual property unethically**

With culture commentators like Kirby Ferguson (2012) proclaiming that “everything is a remix,” it is easy to see how students might assume that online content is fair game for them to reuse and repurpose.

What do usage rights mean to a generation where a viral Internet meme justifies wanton image appropriation?

Desensitized to piracy and accustomed to reposted micro-content (e.g. blogs, tweets), students lack the information literacy skills required for ethical knowledge co-creation (Ravenscroft, 2011). Meanwhile, educators who are expected to guide students through this foggy terrain may themselves be baffled by the complex web of licensing and intellectual property (Farkas, 2012).

**What is new is old again**

Relatability is a powerful tool in getting consumers to adopt new technologies. The original Macintosh leaned on skeuomorphism to provide users with a mental model of how to accomplish a familiar task within its new GUI.

The opposite is true in the case of MOOCs. Teaching and learning are made more difficult as tried-and-true bricks and mortar curriculum models are force fit into a new medium (Ely, 1999). Educators may lack training on how to transition a traditional classroom to an online one (Kemp et al., 2014) and assume that face-to-face practices (e.g. focus on faculty content delivery, assess only at course end) (Terras & Ramsay, 2015) will be acceptable in an online setting where participation, autonomy, and constant feedback are more

critical to keep students engaged from a distance and stem dropout (Baggaley, 2013; Farkas, 2012).

**Technology fosters dependency, leads people to value immediacy over depth**

When calculators first become affordable, schools scrambled to develop policies around their use for fear that students would depend on them to forgo analytical skills afforded by mathematics.

Fast forward to the Internet age, and dependency concerns run much deeper. Some argue that over-reliance on technology threatens the development of critical and evaluative skills needed for e-learning (Apple, 2003; Terras & Ramsay, 2015). Educators pressured by expectations of accessibility and infotainment may be enabling learners who rely on fast, bite-sized, 24-7 support from their instructors rather than “simmer” and figure out high-quality solutions on their own (Farkas, 2012; Ke, 2010, Kemp et al., 2014; Sternberg, & Zhang, 2014).

**Tech enables students to learn on their own terms (How, what, when, where)**

Advancements in technology dovetail nicely with new educational frameworks such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL recognizes that learners differ in how they perceive and comprehend information, the ways they navigate a learning environment,

and how they can be engaged or motivated to learn (CAST, 2011).

Technology supports this framework by empowering diverse learners through accessibility tools, for those with sensory or learning disabilities; remote access to resources to learn at a desired pace; content that is available in a variety of media and retrievable from an environment that best suits the learner; support group

*I find myself having to tone back the sarcasm and humor [teaching online] because I realize they cannot see my facial expressions or hear the inflection in my voice so this leads me to feel as though I cannot be myself.*

Steven Page

work with participatory tools and for those who prefer to work independently, hardware and software that best engage the learner. Technology also extends the learning environment so it is less dependent on spatial, temporal, and human resource constraints, thereby expanding the number of skills one can acquire in a lifetime (Illich, 1971; Terras & Ramsay, 2015).



# ECONOMIC

*People have individual, not just collective, worth.*

They fuel the economy with their personal skills and experience. Who determines their currency, and how is it measured?

This research uncovered five key social dimensions (Incentives, Investment, Market Forces, Pockets of Wealth, and Worth) that drove the insights below.

**Schools contribute to skills shortage by keeping students too long / out of the workplace**

Higher education keeps young people out of the workforce and adult society in general with lengthy degree programs that artificially suppress labour supply (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008; Illich, 1971). In the 1950s, a two-year Associates Degree in Nursing (ADN) was the de facto requirement to become a Registered Nurse in the US. However, in 1982, the National League in Nursing declared the four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) as the new minimum level for the field. The impact of that declaration was dramatic. Almost a decade later, the Department of Health and Human Services had to create a commission to address the unprecedented national nursing shortage (Illich, 1971; The Sentinel

Watch, 2016), thereby putting a damper on the BSN requirement. In 2010, the Institute for Medicine sparked fears of another nursing shortage with a report calling for 80% of all nurses to hold a BSN degree by 2020.

**Experiences and skills = credentials and currency**

Educational value chains do not need to involve money. Swearer (2017) proposes an intriguing smart credentialing system that takes into account all of one’s formal and informal life experiences. A machine agent-cum-guidance counselor would get to know a learner’s goals, acknowledge what they have done, analyze government data and hiring trends, then return highly relevant employment opportunities or specialized skills training still needed to obtain them.

Another concept, put forth by Illich (1971), takes the form of a virtual skills exchange bank that equates experience with currency. People are given basic credits with which to acquire fundamental skills, after which those who contribute their time by teaching are rewarded with more credits and access to advanced teachers.

ECONOMICS OF EDUCATION

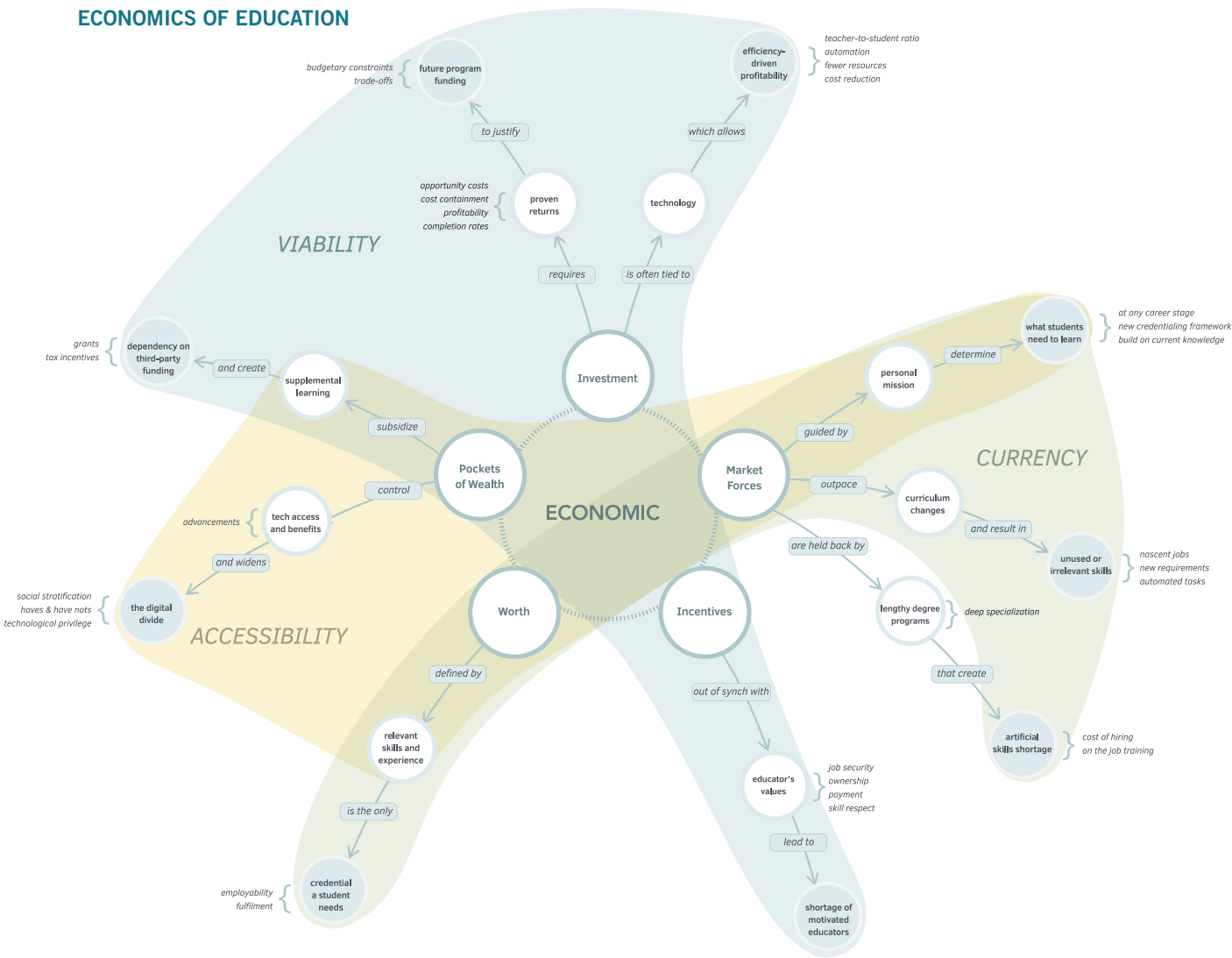


Figure 1.4: Economic dimensions and motivations on which to base curriculum design

**Third parties have to subsidize enrichment programs to supplement traditional learning**

Schools cannot keep up with industry. Various governmental and bureaucratic hurdles make it necessary for educators to tap third parties to support supplemental programs that round out and update what students learn inside the classroom. Seeing the value of real-life experience to the youth, Illich (1971) suggested larger skill

credit to the underprivileged as well as tax incentives for willing industry partners who take on students in what are now modern-day internships.

In the U.S., parental spending on enrichment activities outside the school system has almost tripled since the 1970s, underlining the need that people see to augment STEM-based learning with in-demand creative and team-based skills even if they

have to pay for it themselves. Likewise, independent organizations like Project Lead the Way are also sharing the responsibility of building creative STEM-based programs into schools to help keep them free or at least affordable (Swearer, 2017).

**Let market forces, personal missions guide skill acquisition, development**

Higher education has long controlled the goal-setting aspect of learning. This has resulted in an unbalanced and narrow market for learners that presents industry with graduates who lack diversity and the relevant skill sets for agile workplaces. In contrast, efficient learning markets would allow anyone to start their lifelong journey at birth and acquire the most in-demand skills inexpensively, at any given time and

*From an economic perspective, many people believe that MOOCs will address the fundamental challenge to contain the costs of teaching more students using fewer resources.*

Gerhard Fischer

place, and from any person willing to share their skill or knowledge (Illich, 1971).

Today, independents like Lynda.com and Code Academy are filling this void, while Credly and Degreed offer flexible credentialing frameworks that support a self-directed quest to learn something personally meaningful without the rigid, linear system inherent in legacy institutions (Swearer, 2017).

**Financial security, incentives elude educators**

Higher-education professors appear to be well-compensated but, in reality, are “overwhelmingly badly paid and frustrated by the tight control of the school system” (Illich, 1971, p. 102).

University administrators underestimate the amount of time educators devote to a course outside the classroom, particularly in rapidly changing fields like technology where content requires constant updating to stay relevant. Including office hours, marking, and professional development, the average professor works about 60 hours a week (Kroll, 2013).

How are educators financially rewarded for teaching MOOCs, where 95% of students do not attend that university (Fischer, 2014) and administrators assign fewer credits for teaching such courses? The financial picture gets murkier for adjunct professors, who generally have few benefits and little job security (Kroll, 2013; OPSEU, 2017).

This precarity will likely worsen as technology enables deschooling (Illich, 1971) and

teachers can no longer “ensure their jobs by requiring students to be taught subjects they, the teachers, know” (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008, p. 71).

**Digital technology can improve education delivery, employability, efficiency**

The use of digital technology for curriculum delivery has tremendous potential to raise the standards of teaching and learning (Watson, 2001). Students benefit from greater flexibility in the number of courses and schedules available (Council of Ontario Universities, 2011; Fischer, 2014), making it easier for them to enrol. Despite MOOCs’ notoriously low completion rates, sheer capacity allows them to graduate more students per instructor than traditional programs in a shorter period of time (Fischer, 2014), thereby broadening the selection of candidates from which employers can choose.

That said, technological throughput comes with opportunity costs, not the least of which are significant (and still largely unrealized) betterments of teaching ability and sustained student engagement as learning experiences get dehumanized with volume (Kemp et al., 2014).

This unprecedented change could necessitate perpetual teacher training and professional development, if not radical reform of educational systems (Ely, 1999).

**Required workplace skills change faster than curricula, no longer guarantee relevant jobs**

Created over a century ago, our educational system prepared people with deep specialization to work in hierarchical organizations and solve relatively simple problems. We live in a much different era of dynamic, collab-

*Teachers, like employees in any system, try to ensure their job security by requiring students to be taught subjects they, the teachers, know.*

Ivan Illich

orative workplaces that deal with wicked problems (Swearer, 2017) and, therefore, require new skills.

This leaves educators scrambling to update curricula and create new courses. The impact is already being felt as many students graduate already partially obsolete, leaving them indebted, anxious, and unable to practice in their field of study (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008; Ely, 1999; McGowan & Araya, 2016).

Projections paint a dire picture for students if education maintains its current pace. 65% of children in grade school today will end up in jobs that have yet to be invented. By 2025, one-third of all jobs will be automated. By 2027, 75% of the S&P 500 index will comprise companies that have yet to be created (McGowan & Araya, 2016).

*These are big businesses. They are not colleges that are run like businesses, and they are not businesses that are run like colleges. They are big education businesses.*

Ch., personal communication

**ROI / Overhead matter to education, too**

Education is like any other business concerned with its P&L.

With domestic enrolment down, Ontario colleges are increasingly relying on international students to fill their revenue gap (Chiose, 2017), in some cases catering their courses to students from abroad strictly as a revenue stream (Ch., personal communication, August 5, 2017).

On the cost containment side, the allure of MOOCs is easy to see. Moving courses online would reduce administrative and operating expenses while greatly expanding the student (revenue) base (Contact North, 2013; Fischer, 2014; Illich, 1971; Baggaley, 2013). The Council of Ontario Universities (2011) disagrees, countering that online delivery costs are not necessarily lower. However, this may simply imply that the management of new technologies by traditional institutions is still a work in progress. Regardless, the savings from eliminating major capital expenditures like classroom construction are hard to ignore and will likely keep MOOCs on many schools' financial agenda.

**Tech availability, benefits favour the rich**

Do students from certain districts perform better because they have technology, or do these districts have other influences to begin with that also encourage learning (Kemp et al., 2014)? Do MOOCs work well only for students who are already fairly well educated (Fischer, 2014)? What one does with technology matters more than just having it, but affluence certainly makes availability a non-issue.

On the flip side, schools in lower socio-economic areas must deal with pre-packaged curricula without all the necessary resources to support them (Apple, 2003). Given these limitations, and with curricula developed without educator consultation, there can also be a loss of professional dispositions associated with good teaching, further demarcating the various strata that make up the digital divide (Kemp et al., 2014).

# ENVIRONMENTAL

*Much like our natural environment, the educational climate is rapidly changing.*

Well-worn practices and beliefs can endanger the learning ecology if left unchecked. This research uncovered four key environmental dimensions (Online Platforms, Curricular Structure, Campuses, and Legacy Organizations) that drove the insights below.

**Despite tech's potential to enrich learning, MOOCs are losing students**

Technological advancements should enhance the learner experience beyond the traditional face-to-face model (Kemp et al., 2014). However, with dropout rates as high as 90% (Terras & Ramsay, 2015), MOOCs could not be farther from their potential.

Poor incentives to complete the course, issues understanding the content, and a general lack of support or feedback to address these issues have all been offered as possible explanations. While not inherent in or unique to MOOCs, these weaknesses are starting to define the medium and colour expectations. Others question why or how the traditional, and mostly passive, classroom model has come to stifle a highly interactive delivery method (Terras & Ramsay, 2015). More fundamentally, however,

educators themselves do not understand learner experiences, goals, technical literacy, and preferences well enough to keep MOOC students engaged (Kemp et al., 2014; Terras & Ramsay, 2015).

**Physical spaces are necessary for tech-facilitated ideas to come to fruition**

A compelling tweet can instantly garner thousands of likes but not necessarily action.

While online platforms can reach large audiences efficiently and enable quick information exchange, nothing brings people together, allows new ideas to flourish, and galvanizes change more than a shared physical space (Kemp et al., 2014; Lopes, 2014). Taking a page from recent Egyptian history, "it was not until people were in solidarity, in the streets and voting booths, that the technology made a difference" (Kemp et al., 2014, p. 6).

**Self-directed learning is much more common online**

The 2.0 classroom is a "choose your own adventure" learning experience. Popular in the 1980s and 1990s, the innovative book

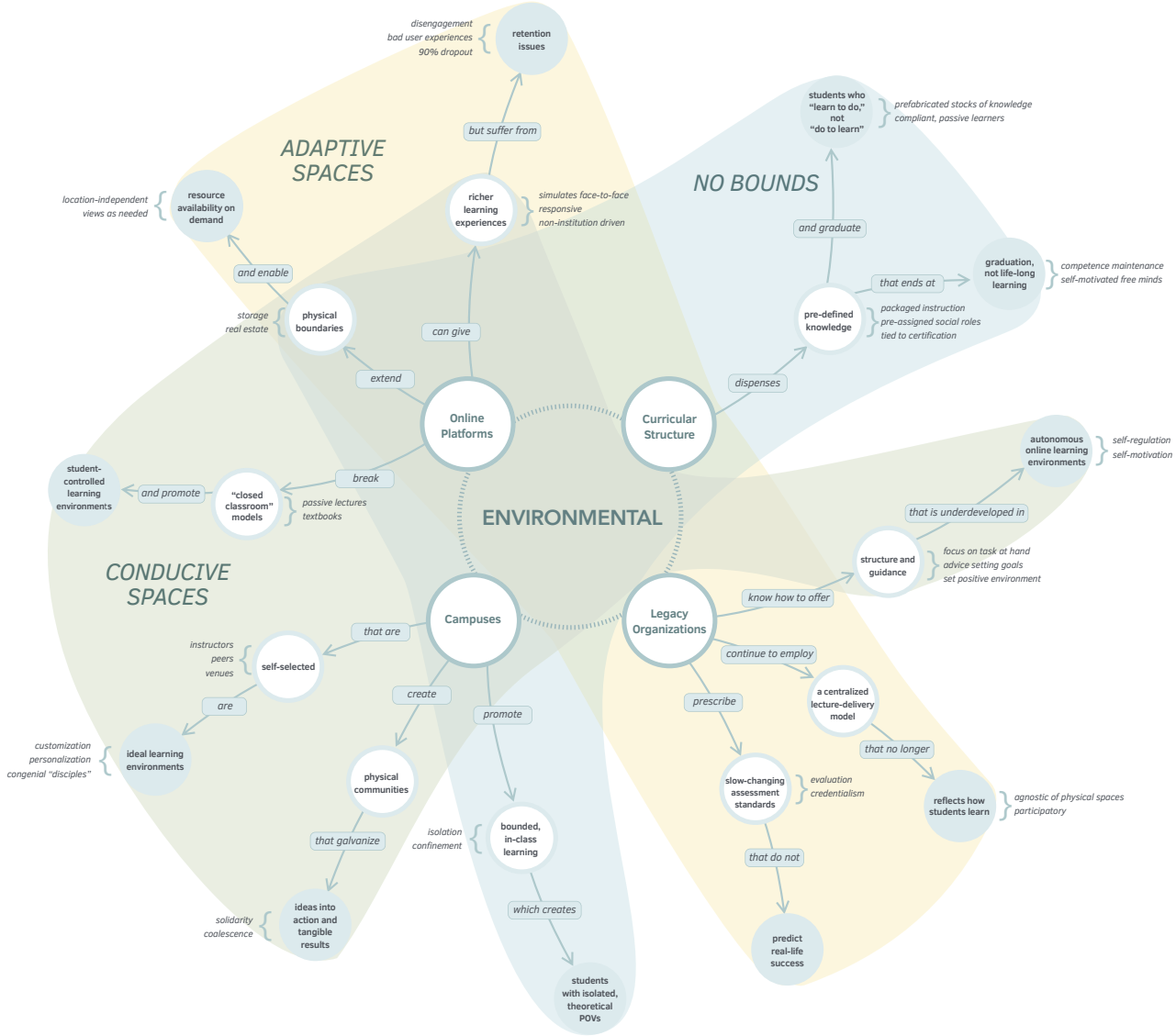


Figure 1.5: Environmental dimensions and motivations on which to base curriculum design

series allows readers to make choices that determine the plot’s outcome. Similarly, students of tech-enabled courses can chart their own learning paths without familiar constraints like curricula, majors, and degrees (Illich, 1971; Farkas, 2012).

With instructor guidance on learning outcomes, self-motivated students select the technologies that best suit their needs, choose only subject matter that is meaning-

ful to them, and give feedback that shapes course material (Farkas, 2012).

In contrast to the “closed classroom” model’s focus on unilateral knowledge transfer (whether through textbooks or lecturers), 2.0’s learner-centric approach recognizes that successful online course delivery hinges on whether students can learn what, when, how, and why they want (Fischer, 2014).

Assessment standards are centrally prescribed, slow to change

Traditionally, performance evaluations have been quantitative and cognitive, where test scores set the standard for all students. A learner-centric environment knows when to switch to more qualitative, behavioural assessment, which gauges what students can do and how well they can do it (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008; Ely, 1999).

While adaptable criteria can be especially useful for online, skill-based courses with diverse learner profiles and uncharted motivations (Terras & Ramsay, 2015), schools are not quick to embrace them. Tellingly, new blockchain approaches to micro-credentialing extracurricular work are direct nods to industry’s demand for continuous, informal learning (Farkas, 2012), yet these initiatives are relegated to university side experiments that entrepreneurs can only hope make it through the system (Swearer, 2017).

Schools program learning to stop after graduation

Schools are set up to package instruction, not learning, with certification based on a curriculum of conditions (Illich, 1971). This practice of downloading and time-stamping knowledge is at odds with today’s world, which values lifelong inquisitiveness over absorbed ideology and self-motivated learning journeys over finite linear programming (Swearer, 2017; Shirvani, 2015).

To this end, there are calls for universities to extend the learning experience and come up with “competence maintenance programs” that keep students and alumni abreast of key developments in their industry (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008, p. 148).

*Although technology can bring people together, it is not until people have come together in a physical community that ideas and positions coalesce and change happens.*

Joseph Flynn

Online platforms expand community resources, “time on task” beyond the campus

Online platforms extend valuable resources, both tangible and intangible. They allow instructors to use communication mechanisms (e.g. Facebook Messenger, portals) to increase contact with students, circulate course materials, or send mass reminders outside designated class hours (Kemp et al., 2014). At their convenience, students can access and review as many times as needed lectures and readings they missed or wouldn’t have had access to (Fischer, 2014).

Reach and resource management aside, it remains to be seen how these platforms impact the quality of that extra time between students, peers, and educators. Some say that the teacher-student bond strengthens as time



*Galileo could only gape touring NASA’s Johnson Space Center. Columbus would quake with terror in a nuclear sub. But a 15th century teacher from the University of Paris would feel right at home in a Berkeley classroom.*

Larry Spence

is devoted to those who could not connect with their teacher in class (Kemp, 2014), but the question of dependency on quick hits and whether online interactions have the same “magical or meaningful” quality as in-person ones are up for discussion (Ma., personal communication, August 4, 2017).

**Learner-centric environments still need structure, guidance**

Even the staunchest critics of traditional schooling believe that educators should set boundaries and assert their authority no matter how motivated or autonomous the student.

Specifically, the role of “wise counsellor” is appropriate when students require expertise in navigating rough or new terrain (Illich, 1971); are faced with roadblocks or alternative methods (Illich, 1971); or respond better to praxis and feedback than theory (Ad., personal communication, August 3, 2017). Apart from their subject matter expertise, educators have a responsibility to control the learning environment and set students

up for success through active problem prevention and purposeful “laissez faire” when independent exploration is beneficial (Farkas, 2012); and establishment of common ground and understanding of local issues and ways of thinking before students dive in, especially when MOOCs cross into unfamiliar international territory (Fischer, 2014).

**Schools are frozen in time**

Former University of California president Clark Kerr observed that starting from the year 1520, only 75 Western institutions still exist today in recognizable form: churches, parliaments, and 70 universities (Shirvani, 2015), all legacy institutions steeped in ritual, hierarchy, and tradition.

Indeed, the stoic lecture hall has withstood the test of time, with tenured professors seemingly oblivious of the agile and innovative workplaces awaiting unsuspecting graduates. Is the classroom model broken? (Ma., personal communication, August 4, 2017; Lv., personal communication, August 5, 2017).

**Schools are isolating places detached from the real world**

The words “confinement”, “magic womb” (Illich, 1971), and “bubble” (Lv., personal communication, August 5, 2017) have all been used to describe the school environment.

Schools shelter learners from reality and stunt their creativity and critical thinking by teaching them how to learn about (vs. be) themselves in their own world, all the while using a pre-packaged process (Illich, 1971; Fischer, 2014). Further, skills are taught without real-world context or application (Fischer, 2014), resulting in an “unbridgeable gulf” between how people learn and how they are expected to function in the workplace (Watson, 2001, Lv., personal communication, August 5, 2017). Lastly, schools tackle issues in artificial silos that correspond to academic majors, thereby robbing students of a multidisciplinary approach to problem solving (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008).

**A self-selected environment (peers, topics, modes) is an ideal environment**

The higher education experience is predetermined and offers little choice. Students follow a prescribed program map of prerequisites and co-requisites and are assigned professors and classmates. With such a system so entrenched, it is hard to imagine an alternative model.

Illich (1971) proposes an arrangement

where learners are empowered to choose a topic of interest independent of any pre-programming, find matches in motivated mentors and peers with like interests, share information, and co-construct new knowledge by exploring and debating each other’s point of view (Farkas, 2012). The result is an engaging, congenial atmosphere that recognizes the importance of the individual, not the institution, in charting their path and achieving their social role in life.

**Schools are set up to dispense knowledge in pre-defined blocks**

Universities have long been compartmentalizing education around well-worn genres, focusing on the accumulation of specialized intellectual capital (Fischer, 2014) and teaching students to deploy these stocks of knowledge within their field of study rather than cross-pollinate with other disciplines to solve broader issues (Watson, 2001).

Meanwhile, the world has moved on from Industrial Revolution-inspired “learning to do” approaches to more “doing to learn” models of knowledge discovery, which acknowledge that today’s complex problems will be better served not by 30 or 40 classic academic majors but by branching pathways of micro-genres of interest that may not even have names today (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008; Swearer, 2017; Watson, 2001).

After centuries of unchallenged rule, higher education's leaders and administrators are facing resistance.

This research uncovered six key political dimensions (Administrators, Autonomous Learning, Educational Feudalism, Entrepreneurial Sub-systems, Policy, and Technologies) that drove the insights below.

**The road to fully entrepreneurial ecosystems is riddled with obstacles (administrative)**

Entrepreneurial ecosystems are difficult to introduce, let alone incorporate cohesively, into legacy environments.

Attitudinally, academics can be skeptical of new technologies and reluctant to adopt changes to established procedures (Watson, 2001; Farkas, 2012). Structurally, there are complications as well. Faculties are housed separately on campus and set up to function in isolation rather than collaborate with other academic sectors and disciplines (Swearer, 2017). Students themselves have been trained to accept hierarchical teaching and administration and may not do

well in a flat, fluid, and free learning environment (Farkas, 2012; Swearer, 2017). Finally, privacy concerns stand in the way of open sharing of information both internally and to outside parties.

**Schools are discriminatory to students, teachers**

Higher education is not open to all. Universities require a secondary level of education, which effectively shuts out younger teens who want to learn. While mature students would qualify, the culture is decidedly youth-oriented and can leave older adults feeling out of place.

Under the cloak of standards and fairness, students are mandated to receive pre-determined content in set ways regardless of their individual interests and learning preferences. Instruction is still mostly tied to the classroom and built around the goals and expertise of teachers who, in turn, are subject to specific guidelines of when and where they can teach. As such, instructors are restricted in their ability to share their skills and knowledge even if there is a market for them (Illich, 1971).

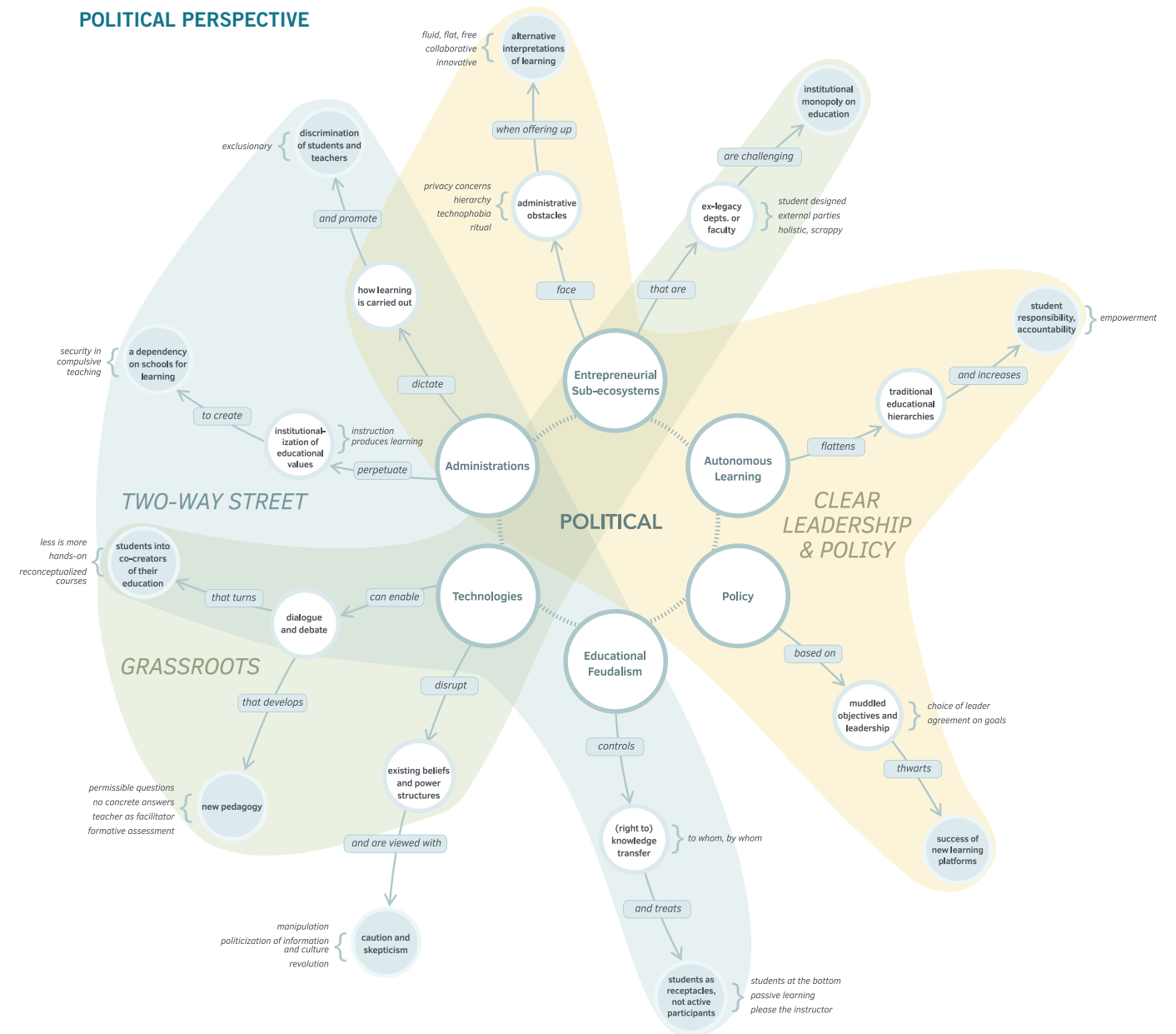


Figure 1.6: Political dimensions and motivations on which to base curriculum design

## Flawed policy, leadership undermine success and change

Standards for good online education is a case of the “blind attempting to lead the sighted” (Baggaley, 2013, p. 137). Rather than seek the guidance of interaction designers, online educators, and of course, tech-savvy students, administrators, engineers, and “bricks and

mortar heavyweights” stumble as they try to understand and develop a usable online learning platform (Baggaley, 2013, p. 137).

Schools also grapple with dichotomous rationales for teaching technology. While there is a clear focus on the mastery of ICT skills used in the workplace, there is no clearly stated mandate to use this mastery to

further the rest of the curriculum, thus creating a silo within a silo. This confusion of purpose reflects the difficulty of implementing flawed policies in schools (Watson, 2001).

**Participate and co-create, don't simulate**

When Illich (1971) met with a high school resistance movement demanding more education, he was struck by their clever slogan “Participation not Simulation,” which was, unfortunately, misunderstood to be a demand for less. The spirit of that motto lives today in instructional technology built on an “architecture of participation” (Farkas, 2012, p. 83).

Undoubtedly, participatory technologies have disrupted educational dynamics. Learners are now simultaneously con-

uncertainty and less reliance on instructors. With more hands-on, informal types of learning, the days of passive knowledge transfer may be numbered (LaMonica, 2006).

**Technology up-ends current beliefs, power structures (Tech has politics)**

Outside the classroom, Internet technologies have been accused of large-scale circulation and politicization of information, even maneuvering people into “behaving like mass-produced, specialized mechanisms” (Khan, 2007, p. 436).

As technology is institutionalized in education, the fine line between “teaching and learning online” and “the use of technology to augment teaching and learning” (Kemp et al., 2014, p. 6) becomes political when interpreted as a win-lose choice between having a pedagogical complement or a competitor.

For students, this privileging of technology is already repositioning them as empowered knowledge co-producers (Farkas, 2012; Fischer, 2014). Whether students use technology (or technology uses them) to spark counterculture movements that question institutionally engineered values (Illich, 1971; Watson, 2001) or mobilize around larger issues (Khan, 2007) remains to be seen.

*The flattening of hierarchy between student and instructor is necessary to unlock the power of these technologies.*

Meredith Farkas

sumers and co-constructors of knowledge with their peers (Farkas, 2012; Fischer, 2014), resulting in greater comfort with

**Autonomy in learning = motivation + accountability**

Flattening the traditional classroom hierarchy shifts the educator’s role to facilitator, presenting new ideas and concepts in a nurturing environment while students take over their own learning (Farkas, 2012) and explore the applications of new knowledge and technologies to their personal goals.

This approach is closer to the “Education for all means education by all” ideal set out by Illich (1971, p. 12), that is: drawing on peer experience and harnessing technology to create channels of personal and creative expression independent of any institution.

**Entrepreneurial sub-ecosystems are emerging within legacy environments**

Supported by faculty and experienced practitioners, students should be designing their own learning experience without the constraints of onerous curricular requirements (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008). Taking this entrepreneurial approach to the next level, special university teams are partnering with government, not-for-profits, businesses, and other entities to set up innovation and maker spaces within campuses (Swearer, 2017).

“Amazing, scrappy, and crazy” (Swearer, 2017), these new spaces could not be

farther in culture, activity, and composition from traditional schools. Illich (1971) famously associated the liberation of critical and creative resources with taking control back from institutions, so it is easy to see how these entrepreneurs could be seen

*Our educational system is the only major institution in our country that officially recognizes autocracy.*

Russell Ackoff

as threats. Wisely, teams creatively work around and on top of infrastructure built for another era and stay low by not being officially connected to any one department or faculty (Swearer, 2017).

**Democratic dialogue in classrooms promotes learning**

An environment that encourages open discussion yields greater learning than one that is solely lecture-based.

When instructors initiate informal discussions with students before class, they can gauge student progress to date, gain insight on what students want to learn, and tailor their curriculum and pedagogy with this simple formative assessment (Farkas, 2012). A shift in emphasis from concrete answers and lectures to explor-

*Rather than treat pedagogy as the transfer of knowledge from teachers who are experts to students who are receptacles, educators should consider more hands-on and informal types of learning.*

John Seely Brown

atory questions and debates develops students’ core skills and dispositions as they work with information in a safe environment (Farkas, 2012). Meanwhile, instructors can draw on their knowledge (or address their lack of it) by challenging students to ask controversial questions and actively participate in the dialogue and discourse themselves (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008; Watson, 2001).

**Education is feudalistic, one-way**

Traditional pedagogy formed in an era when expert knowledge was scarce (Farkas, 2012). The result is the familiar teaching (not learning)-centered scenario of a “sage on the stage” transmitting information to a captive audience waiting to receive it (LaMonica, 2006). Ackoff & Greenberg (2008) describe schools as “the only major institution in our country that officially recognizes autocracy,” where

students are at the bottom and feel that they must conform to instructor expectations to get a good mark (Farkas, 2012). Teachers themselves have to please the system, as their legitimacy and livelihood largely depend on their association with an educational institution (Illich, 1971).

**Schools promote the institutionalization of values**

According to Illich (1971), the existence of schools produces a demand for schooling. As the notion that “instruction produces learning” takes hold, the self-taught are met with suspicion, the value of their education marginalized due to an absence of certification. The true victims, however, may be the students who, “addicted to being taught,” now only value the result, having unlearned to “do their thing,” “be themselves,” and stay true to their lifelong mission (Swearer, 2017).

# VALUES

*Do schools know what makes each student tick?*

Deeply-held truths are highly personal and serve as a compass that guides each individual in their unique journey of learning.

This research uncovered seven key values-related dimensions (Autonomy, Freedom, Good Pedagogy, Humanistic Values, Knowledge, True Learning, and Wisdom) that drove the insights below.

**“Students” should be able to choose their “teacher” (source of learning)**

Illich (1971) envisioned a deschooled society where learners are not pre-assigned any instructors. Instead, they choose their own learning partner based on skill matching and consultations with former students about their own experiences with a particular instructor. This transparent and objective peer rating system creates a level of educator accountability that would benefit higher education.

**Education’s output should be wisdom and life skills, not mastery of transient tools**

Too often, instructors fall into the trap of teaching students the latest tools to stay current, only to find these supplanted by “the next big thing” come graduation.

Pedagogy should be grounded in transferable skills (e.g. collaboration, self-direction, creativity, information literacy) that foster lifelong learning and critical inquiry (Farkas, 2012). Since students acquire so much content already from a myriad of sources, from online to peers (Ma., personal communication, August 4, 2017), a solid foundation that allows them to build wisdom from the consequences of their actions and learn from their mistakes (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008) may be a more lasting educational legacy.

**Technology dehumanizes learning, education**

Education has morphed from a humane exchange of ideas to a “technological levianthan that is slowly usurping the soul of the profession” (Kemp et al., 2014, p. 4).

As education becomes more dependent on technology, a greater concern for the return of humanistic values like identity, ethics, and understanding (Illich, 1971) will likely emerge as a countering force and support various aspects of instructional design (Ely, 1999). Of course, one can also



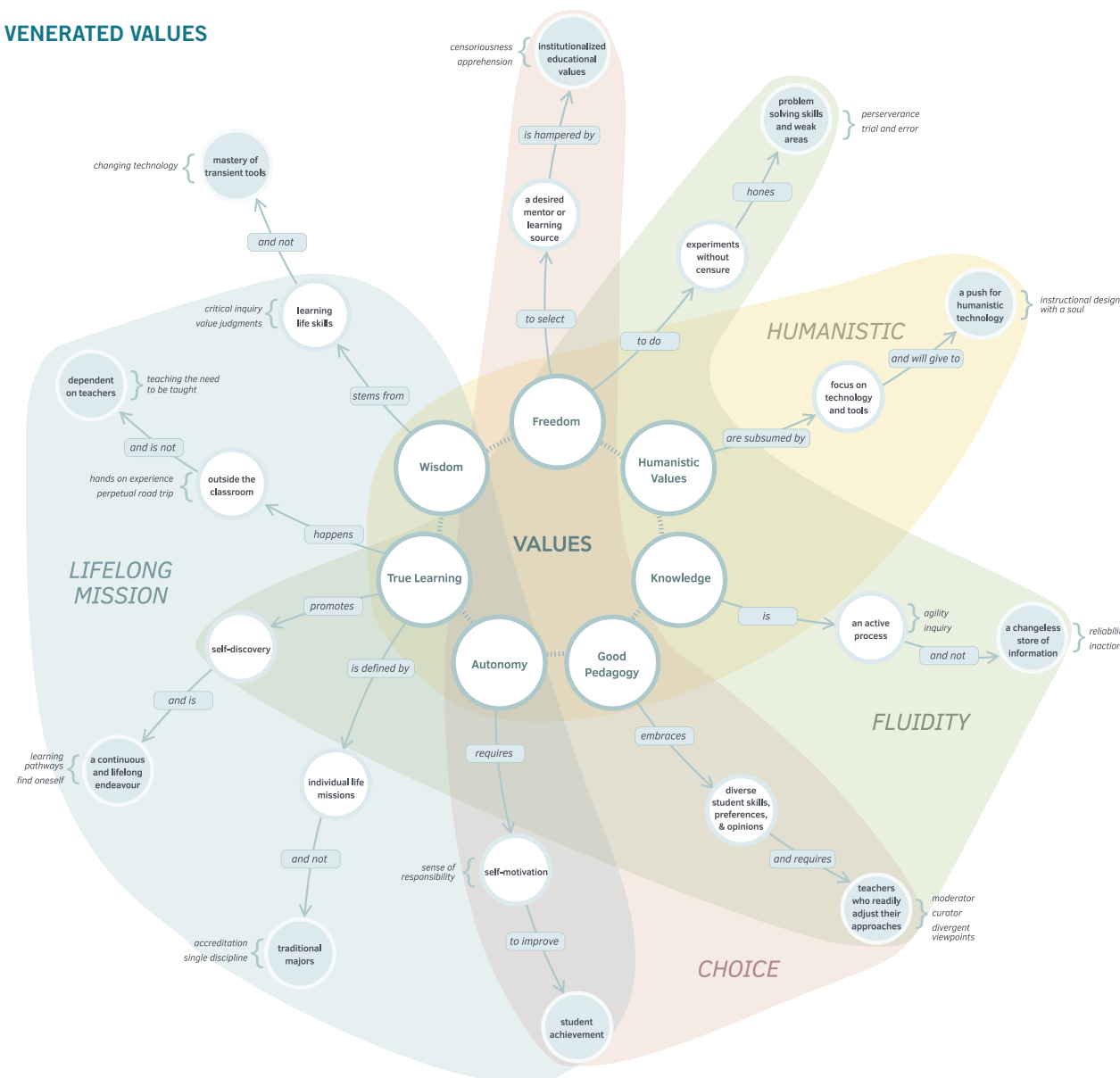


Figure 1.7: Values dimensions and motivations on which to base curriculum design

look to the university campus for solace, a reliable and durable constant through centuries of change (Shirvani, 2015).

A “super teacher” embraces and manages student diversity (skills, preferences, opinions)

Good pedagogy considers each student as an individual. While harder to administer in MOOCs due to their size, the learner auton-

omy that this platform affords (e.g. choice of resources, pace) makes an educator's thorough understanding of the skills and psychological capacities of students even more critical so they can support independent learning (Terras & Ramsay, 2015).

Successful online educators also need to be able to moderate a large online community and allow divergent viewpoints to expose learners to a range of ideas and

beliefs (Farkas, 2012); curate and position student-generated content, which can be seen as excessive and less valuable than teacher-provided materials (Fischer, 2014); and be on the lookout for emerging counter-cultures that need to be understood (Illich, 1971).

Learning is a continuous, lifelong endeavour  
of (self) discovery

In today's knowledge economy, what one needs to be considered informed is constantly changing. Knowledge is no longer defined as something learned once, but rather a lifelong endeavor (Farkas, 2012). "We need to get students to move from majors to missions. Passionate personal missions that they pursue throughout their lives" (Swearer, 2017).

Higher education can help by creating an environment that focuses less on the delivery of knowledge and more on its discovery (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008; Farkas, 2012).

## True learning happens outside the classroom

Schools have taught people the need to be taught. This lesson discourages independent growth and closes the door on life's surprises and teachable moments that aren't institutionally sanctioned (Illich, 1971).

However, “the objective of education is learning, not teaching” (Ackoff & Green-

berg, 2008, p. 5) and a “commitment to developing the whole person” (Shirvani, 2015, para. 2).

Connecting students with others and external environments can be the “perpetual field trip” (Ma., personal communication, August 4, 2017) that students can build on to learn for life.

*But what I couldn't learn  
was how to think, how to  
form an opinion, how to  
argue that opinion.*

Ad., personal communication

Knowledge is not fixed. It is nimble, adaptive

The perception of knowledge must change from something reliable and changeless to something that is an inquiry and activity (Hovorka & Rees, 2009).

To that end, educational institutions can adopt design learning that, in the spirit of design thinking, pushes formal education to “entrepreneurial dispositions and skills necessary to adapt to rapid social and technological change” (McGowan & Araya, 2016, para. 8).

Furthermore, universities can focus their efforts on building deep learning mindsets with machine intelligence that will help people “continually navigate complexity over the course of their lives” (Swearer, 2017).

*We need to get students to move from majors to missions. Passionate personal missions that they pursue throughout their lives with and without co-created learning pathways.*

Randy Swearer

**Learner autonomy + self-motivation = achievement**

Teaching cannot produce learning without motivation (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008). It is a driver that cannot be forced on students but comes from a genuine desire to learn, typically to ignite one’s career or satisfy a thirst for knowledge (Ad., personal communication, August 3, 2017).

Adding learner autonomy to motivation can make for a powerful combination. Student achievement has been shown to improve with a greater sense of responsibility (Mcloughlin & Lee, 2008).

**Define learning by missions, not majors**

People are looking for educators who can translate today’s complexity into meaningful skills like critical thinking and how to be better self-learners (Ma., personal communication, August 4, 2017). Educating the whole person will serve as a foundation to help prepare young people for a world of multiple careers or careers that do not yet exist (Shirvani, 2015).

To that end, more flexibility can be built into the educational system by waiving undergraduate degree requirements and reserving exit requirements only for students who need certification (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008).

**Freedom to fail is key to success. Just do it**

If the consequences of failing were minimized, students would often challenge themselves to work on their weaknesses (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008).

Trial and error, a natural problem-solving skill developed at birth and honed by Montessori schools, may unlock the secret to success in life (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008; Swearer, 2017). It may not be a coincidence that so many Silicon Valley leaders attended Montessori and that the tech industry embraces the iterative and experimental “doing to learn” approach to design (Swearer, 2017). In the end, it is important to act. To quote Harvard educator Tony Wagner, “It is not what you know, but what you can do with what you know”.

# WHERE TO FROM HERE?

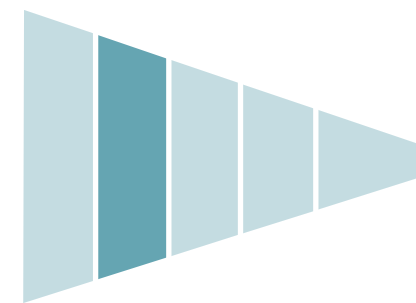
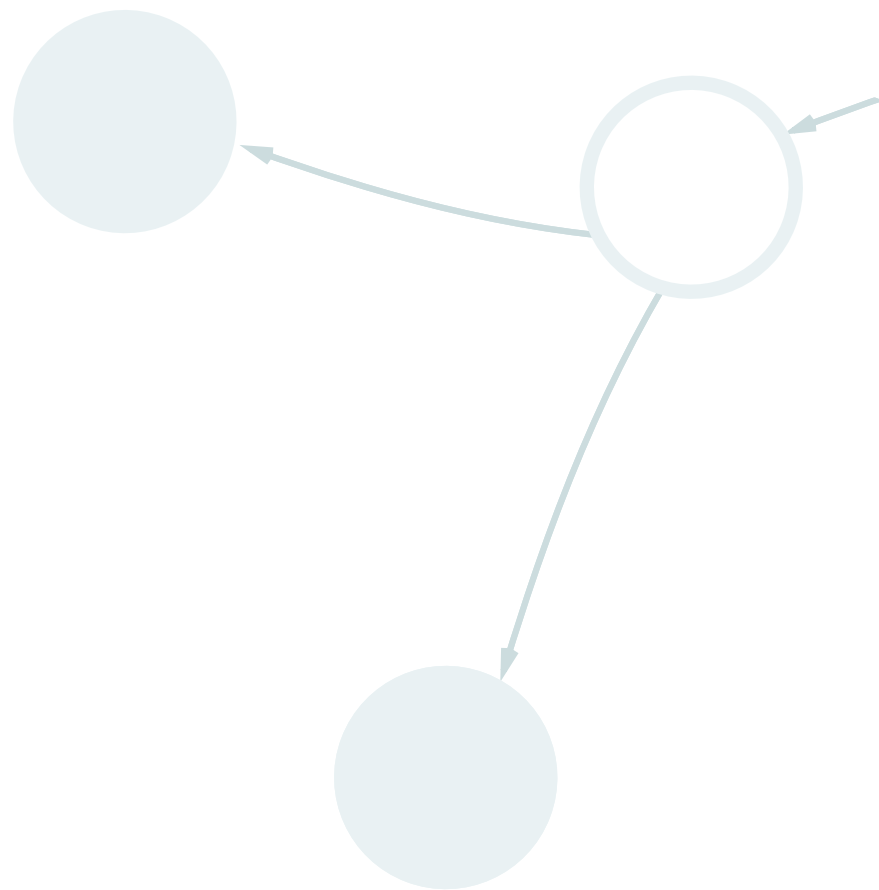
*Derived Program Redesign Principles*

How might technology and pedagogy function effectively as one to serve post-secondary design learners of the future? For program redesign to be compelling, it must incorporate synergistic combinations of the following human-centred motivations, levers, and tensions:

♥ MOTIVATIONS	⚙ LEVERS	⚖ TENSIONS
<b>SOCIAL</b>		
 <b>ACTIVE LEARNING</b> The pursuit of highly personal learning outcomes through individual drive and co-creation of knowledge	Learning Environment Accountability, Ownership	Choice / Need to Succeed Blame / Responsibility
 <b>COMMUNITY BUILDING</b> An inclusive, well-organized circle that creates emotionally satisfying relationships	Outside Influences Classroom Environment Interpersonal Relationships	Interaction / Isolation Skills / Workplace Culture Competition / Co-operation
 <b>EMPLOYABILITY</b> A program that is highly respected and valued by employers, students, and the public	Transferable Skills Planning Infrastructure Quality of Online Learning	Employment / Fulfilment Engagement / Productivity Accessibility / Recognition
<b>TECHNOLOGICAL</b>		
 <b>CODE OF CONDUCT</b> Clear policies on the acceptable use of technology in interactions with people and intellectual property	A Remix Culture Intellectual Curiosity	Attribution / Appropriation Dependency / Autonomy
 <b>CUSTOMIZED LEARNING</b> Efficient tools that let students create and pursue learning pathways as unique as they are	Supporting Data Unprepared Educators Educational Intent	Variability / Scale Relevance / Engagement Availability / Effectiveness
 <b>OPTIMAL USE</b> A culture of learning that embraces iteration and experimentation in the use of technology	Deceptively Familiar Idealized Expectations	Comfort / Innovation Extension / Limitation
 <b>PEOPLE FIRST</b> A program that puts technology in the service of students and teachers, not the other way around	Instruction Traditional Constraints	Encouragement / Indifference Personalization / Constraints

♥ MOTIVATIONS	🔧 LEVERS	⚖️ TENSIONS
<b>ECONOMIC</b>		
 <b>ACCESSIBILITY</b> Equal opportunity to have and to use technology to fuel one’s personal learning mission	Tech Access and Benefits	Tech Costs / Admin. Budgets
	Supplemental Learning	Public Demand / Static Curricula
	Personal Mission	Market Demand / Learner Interest
 <b>VIABILITY</b> A financially efficient business model that does not sacrifice student and faculty engagement	Proven Returns	Metrics / Funding
	Educator’s Values	Compensation / Expectations
	Technology	Tech Costs / Profitability
 <b>CURRENCY</b> Skills and experiences that are in tune with personal goals and ahead of industry demands	Curriculum Changes	Market Pace / Static Curricula
	Relevant Skills & Experience	Employability / Certification
	Lengthy Degree Programs	Market Demand / Tuition Income
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>		
 <b>ADAPTIVE SPACES</b> Fluid environments that mold physically, procedurally, and technologically to student feedback and the outside world	Slow-Changing Assessment Standards	Outdated Assessments / Industry Expectations
	A Centralized Lecture-Delivery Model	Student Engagement / Legacy Culture
	Physical Boundaries	Demand / Availability
	Richer Learning Experiences	Richer Experiences / Retention Issues
 <b>CONDUCTIVE SPACES</b> Student-defined learning environments supported by expert guidance and venues to implement ideas	Physical Communities	Ideas / Activism
	Self-Selected	Personalized Environment / Legacy Culture
	“Closed Classroom” Models	Student-Controlled / Legacy
	Structure and Guidance	Guidance / Autonomy
 <b>NO BOUNDS</b> An eye-opening learning landscape that is not walled in by time, space, or orthodoxy	Bounded, In-Class Learning	Confinement / External Influences
	Pre-Defined Knowledge	Learn To Do / Do To Learn

♥ MOTIVATIONS	🔧 LEVERS	⚖️ TENSIONS
<b>POLITICAL</b>		
 <b>CLEAR LEADERSHIP &amp; POLICY</b> Holistic and widely understood direction built on institutional diversity and student success	Muddled Objectives and Leadership	Dubious Objectives / Quality of Learning
	Traditional Hierarchies	Autonomy / Accountability
	Administrative Obstacles	Change / Red Tape
 <b>GRASSROOTS</b> A willingness to take a bottom-up approach to designing the future of the program	Existing Beliefs, Structures	Empowerment / Threat
	Dialogue and Debate	Openness / Teacher’s Role
	Ex-Legacy Depts. or Faculty	Entrepreneurial Spirit / Monopolies
 <b>TWO-WAY STREET</b> A democratic mindset that encourages dialogue and feedback for positive change	(Right to) Knowledge Transfer	Active Learning / Passive Learning
	Institutionalization of Educational Values	Dependency / Autonomy
	How Learning is Carried Out	Prescribed Learning / Discrimination
<b>VALUES</b>		
 <b>HUMANISTIC</b> A celebration of each student as a unique, whole being who wants to achieve	Focus on Technology and Tools	Human-Centred / Tool-Centred
 <b>FLUIDITY</b> A readiness to embrace the unknown and quickly change course in the name of progress	An Active Process	Inquiry / Inaction
	Experiment Without Censure	Trial and Error / Failure
	Diverse Student Skills, Preferences, and Opinion	Diverse Learner / Flexible Educator
 <b>LIFELONG MISSION</b> A tireless quest of self-discovery that doesn’t stop at graduation	Learning Life Skills	Learning / Mastery
	Outside the Classroom	Dependency / Discovery
	Self-Discovery	Discovery / Commitment
	Individual Life Missions	Single Discipline / Multiple Disciplines
 <b>CHOICE</b> The confidence to put students in the driver’s seat of their education	A Desired Mentor or Learning Source	Choice / Barriers
	Self-Motivation	Autonomy / Motivation



PHASE 2

# REFRAME

DESIGN EDUCATION





# PARADIGM SHIFT

For program redesign to be relevant and cohesive, the various motivations behind post-secondary design education need to coalesce around a compelling underlying truth. What, then, might this quintessential anchor be that we should focus on and innovate around? How do we re-frame and solve for the core issue rather

than chase down symptomatic evidence? Through Causal Layered Analysis (CLA), Phase 2 of this research ladders down to interpret key stakeholder perceptions of a pervasive dilemma and suggests alternative paradigms for post-secondary design education.

## GETTING TO THE BOTTOM OF THINGS

### Causal Layered Analysis

Developed by futurist and academic Sohail Inayatullah (2005), Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) was employed to uncover a powerful, metaphorical basis for program change that not only unifies our motivations into a single redesign context but also crystallizes our understanding of design education, all the while enabling stakeholders to see problems, generate solutions, tell stories, and influence others with a fresh, shared mental model (by defining and structuring its conceptual system in terms of another).

### Workshops

To this end, two separate in-person CLA workshops were held at OCAD University’s graduate building. While the mechanics of each session were identical, two distinct stakeholder groups were recruited to bring forth a more holistic view of post-secondary design education:

- Recent graduates working in design, for firsthand accounts of their learning experiences and how these have prepared them (or not) for professional life
- Design educators, for an insider view of academia, including the challenges of teaching and being part of the educational system (e.g. administration,

politics, the business of education) For recruitment criteria, participant profiles, and moderator’s guide, please see Appendix E.

### Choosing a Starting Point

The critical choice of problem statement from which to ladder down was driven by recurring themes that surfaced during different stages of this research, from literature review, to Human-Centred STEEPV analysis, to expert interviews. More precisely, the notion that there is a growing, undesirable chasm between design education and industry was widely held by thought leaders and design professionals consulted in this project.

A digital pedagogy specialist (Mo., personal communication, June 27, 2018) recalls a situation where a highly educated graduate lacked the skills to stay employed with a software development firm, concluding that higher education “pushes out all these learners with skills we think the industry wants.” As design workplaces deal more and more with wicked problems, students continue to be educated for deep specialties aimed at specific issues (Swearer, 2017). Students are graduating already partially obsolete (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008). Ba. (personal communication, June 30, 2018), a working designer and educator, adds that graduates who

have the confidence to apply their knowledge on the job are just as hard to find.

From my personal experience leading Sheridan College’s Web Design program, this disconnect between curriculum and industry also bears weighty financial consequences for the educational institution. With interfaces outgrowing the browser and the display (e.g. chatbots, smart speakers, augmented reality), “Web Design” has ceased to resonate with potential candidates, resulting in a five-year trend of declining applications and enrolment that is only now being addressed during a program suspension.

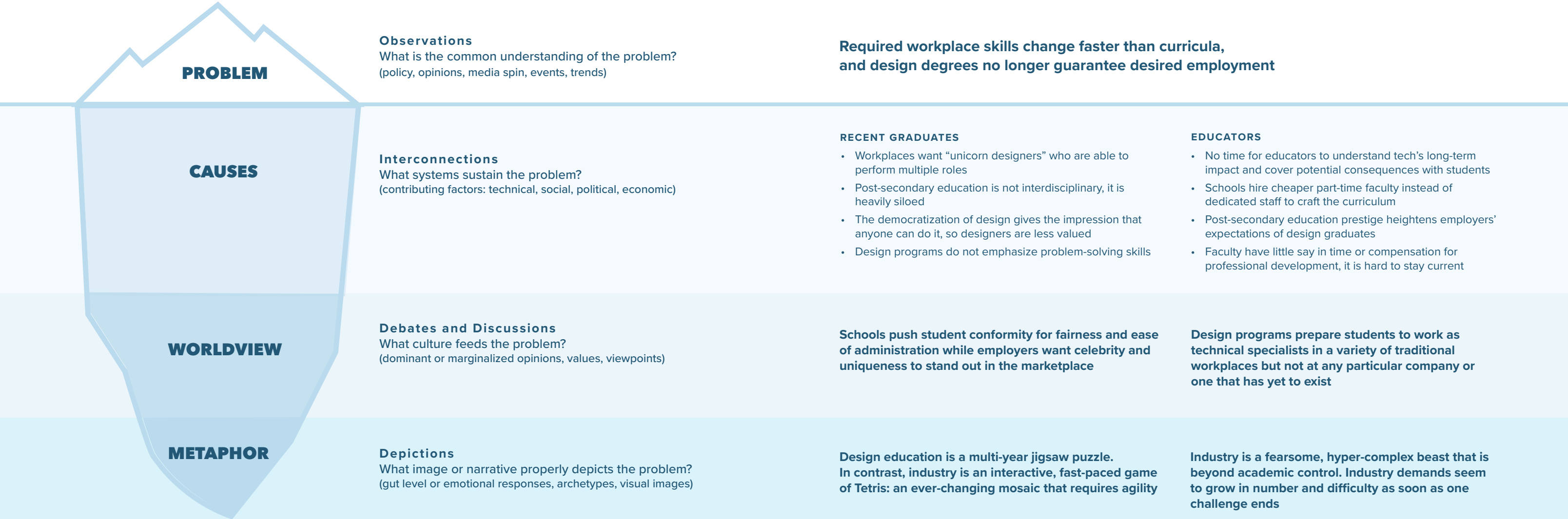
With these in mind, workshop participants started from the surface problem that

*“Required workplace skills change faster than curricula, and design degrees no longer guarantee desired employment.”*

Figure 2.1 summarizes the rhetoric, systemic issues, worldviews, and depictions revealed in the sessions.

The resulting myth and metaphor are then presented in greater detail on the following pages (See “Of Bricks & Beasts”), where each mental model is broken down for moments of truth, pivotal mechanisms, emotional underpinnings, and unexpected commonalities that might translate well in a design education context.

Figure 2.1: CLA Workshop Summary





## TETRIS

Tetris is a tile-matching video game by Russian software engineer Alexey Pajitnov. Launched on June 6, 1984, it appears on nearly every game console, computer, and mobile phone OS today, making it one of the best-selling games of all time.

### Gameplay

Players rotate, move, and drop a series of falling geometric shapes (Tetriminos) into a rectangular Matrix. At increasing speeds, players attempt to clear as many horizontal lines as possible by completing rows of blocks without empty spaces. When the stack of Tetriminos reaches the Skyline, the game is over.

### REDUCTIONISM OF TETRIMINOS

Made of the same four blocks, seven shapes (Tetriminos) can be dealt in one of 5,040 ways.<sup>3</sup> Individual strategy, judgment, and skill equip players to manage the unknown, fill and clear rows given any shape, and determine how their personal Matrix ultimately looks. **Takeaway:** Foundational training, problem analysis, internal locus of control, practice, risk management

### WINNING STRATEGIES

wikiHow offers the following to improve at Tetris: (1) Learn to do a T-spin (craft a T-shaped gap for a T-shaped piece to be rotated into); (2) Do Tetrises (clear four lines at once); (3) Know your playing style; (4) Avoid garbage; and (5) Push yourself (save–don’t restart—a game that’s going poorly).<sup>3</sup> **Takeaway:** Entrepreneurship, invention, EQ, good learning habits, personal best

**RECENT GRADUATES:** Design education is a multi-year jigsaw puzzle: a single-solution endeavor where patience and ability to handle volume in a stable environment are key. In contrast, industry is an interactive, fast-paced game of Tetris: an ever-changing mosaic requiring agility, strategy, and looking ahead to win. For post-secondary design programs to evolve and become more relevant, which aspects of Tetris might we project onto academia to refresh its thinking?

### TETRIS EFFECT

Coined by avid players, “Tetris Effect” is the way the game taps into “our universal desire to create order out of chaos,” marries “continuous fun with mental stimulation,” and emboldens gamers to face real-world challenges by seeing Tetriminos in everyday situations.<sup>1</sup> In evolutionary AI, it speaks to bounded rationality, where hasty, imprecise actions trump calculated, optimal ones that are not completed in time. **Takeaway:** Applied learning, next-level engagement, confident problem-solving, rapid sensemaking

### CEREBRAL ADDICTION

Psychologist Vladimir Pokhilko named three drivers of Tetris’ addictive appeal. “The main part is visual insight. You make your visual decision, it happens almost immediately. Insight means emotion: small, but many of them, every two, three seconds. The second is unfinished action. Tetris has many (that) force you to continue and make it very addictive. The third is automatization: In a couple of hours, the activity becomes a habit, a motivation to repeat.”<sup>2</sup> **Takeaway:** Clear cause and effect, instant gratification, frequent feedback, inspirational goals just out of reach, repetition

### WINNING AND BRAIN EFFICIENCY

Instead of reaching a pre-defined end, success in Tetris entails “making the game last indefinitely.” Psychologist Richard Haier found that while learning curves were steep, brain energy consumption normalized after four to eight weeks of daily play while performance grew seven-fold. Further, faster stimuli and harder decisions used less brain energy, especially in the best players, “the ones most efficient at dealing with Tetris’ Daedalian geometry.”<sup>2</sup> **Takeaway:** Lifelong learning, continuous improvement, skill-based stress management, long-term payoff

## Key Learnings

**Addictive experiences promote lifelong learning.** Frequent hits of emotional satisfaction and long-term rewards for advancing progressively larger passion projects motivate students to ritualize learning and seek “power ups” for personal pleasure, not professional survival.

**Methods will minimize the madness.** Core courses that emphasize “permanent” skills (e.g. human factors, innovation methods, analysis and synthesis, entrepreneurship) complement technical ones and better prepare students to thrive in unfamiliar and complex situations.

1 O’Conner, J. (2019, January, 31). It’s All Connected. The beauty of Tetris Effect after a year of grief and sorrow. *Medium*. Retrieved from <https://medium.com/super-jump/its-all-connected-7584b84db266>

2 Goldsmith, J. (1994, May 1). This is your brain on Tetris. *Wired*. Retrieved from <https://www.wired.com/1994/05/tetris-2/>

3 How to Get Better at Tetris. (n.d.) *wikiHow*. Retrieved from <https://www.wikihow.com/Get-Better-at-Tetris>

Figure 2.2: Towards a New Mental Model

# OF BRICKS

# & BEASTS

**DESIGN EDUCATORS:** Industry is a fearsome, hyper-complex beast beyond academic control. Expected to apply a gamut of creative, technical, and strategic skills to unfamiliar disciplines and professional situations, ill-prepared graduates are overwhelmed by industry demands, which seem to grow in number and difficulty as soon as one challenge ends. Which supernatural elements might educational institutions humanize to help design graduates thrive in industry?

### CHAOS THEORY

Fuzzy logic founder Lotfi Zadeh (1973) explains, “As the complexity of a system increases, our ability to make precise yet significant statements about its behaviour diminishes until a threshold is reached beyond which precision and significance (or relevance) become almost mutually exclusive.”<sup>4</sup> **Takeaway:** Experimental mindset, iterative approach, culture of praxis

### HYDRA HEADS AND LONGEVITY

Symbolic of complexity’s pervasiveness, Hydra’s central head was immortal, leading Heracles to bury it “not forever eradicated, only controlled, contained, and constantly kept in check.”<sup>5</sup> For Heracles, Hydra’s regenerating heads were problematic but for Hydra, “this is resilience. A corollary to the Hydra paradox, the source of threat is also the source of fertility and productivity.”<sup>5</sup> **Takeaway:** Embrace complexity, build experience, develop grit

Borkowski, P. (n.d.). Lernaean Hydra. [Illustration].

**Ambiguity, speed, and risk are resources to be used, not threats to be contained.** Faced with scarce assets (e.g. discourse with industry, dynamic feedback, eustress) that are critical inputs to value creation, design programs and students should vigorously compete for (not avoid) the new.

### POWER RELATIONSHIPS

That Hera raised Hydra as Heracles’ punishment and induced the madness that led to his crime shows a hubristic manager/managed dynamic that falters in non-linear environments. “Hydra does not need a brutal Heracles-manager, but her own dangerous powers do need limits.”<sup>5</sup> **Takeaway:** Planned interdependence of industry and academia, neither governance nor resistance

### FIREBRAND AND BLOOD AS SMART TOOLS

Wielding a club and brute force, Heracles struggled until Iolatus’ inspired use of fire quelled Hydra’s multiplying heads. Dipping arrows in the slain monster’s poisonous blood, Heracles acquired potent means of achieving future labours: Slaying the Stymphalian Birds and Obtaining the Cattle of Geryon.<sup>6</sup> **Takeaway:** Buildable, multi-purpose, platform-agnostic toolkit

### IOLAUS AND PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES

Knowing he could not defeat Hydra alone, Heracles called on his mortal nephew Iolaus, who applied Athena’s wisdom to cauterize each neck as Heracles beheaded, thus stopping new ones from sprouting. The duo’s success may be attributed to “individuals capable of independent thought... while the heads of Hydra...conjoined at the body...must work in lockstep.”<sup>6</sup> When Eurystheus knew of Iolaus’ role, he deemed the Second Labour void.<sup>6</sup> **Takeaway:** Youth partnership, reward collaboration, complementary talents

**Partnering with design students will go further than mentoring them.** Opportunities for students to act as respected partners to industry (versus passive receivers of advice) train them for individual contribution, trust, responsibility, compromise, and shared purpose.



## HYDRA OF LERNA

In Greek myth, Hydra is a serpentine monster whose lair was Lake Lerna, an entrance to the Underworld. “It had poisonous breath and blood so virulent that even its scent was deadly.”<sup>7</sup> Depictions from 500 BC show multiple heads and tails, suggesting its ability to regenerate.

### Second Labour of Heracles

After killing his family in a fit of madness, Heracles was ordered to serve the king of Mycenae Eurystheus for 12 years and perform 12 impossible feats, the second of which was to slay the Lernaean Hydra.<sup>7</sup>

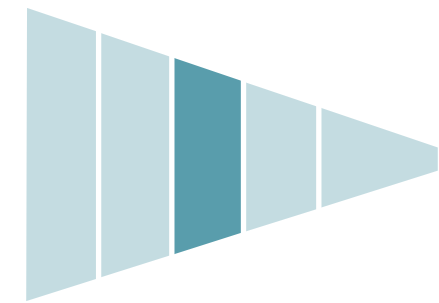
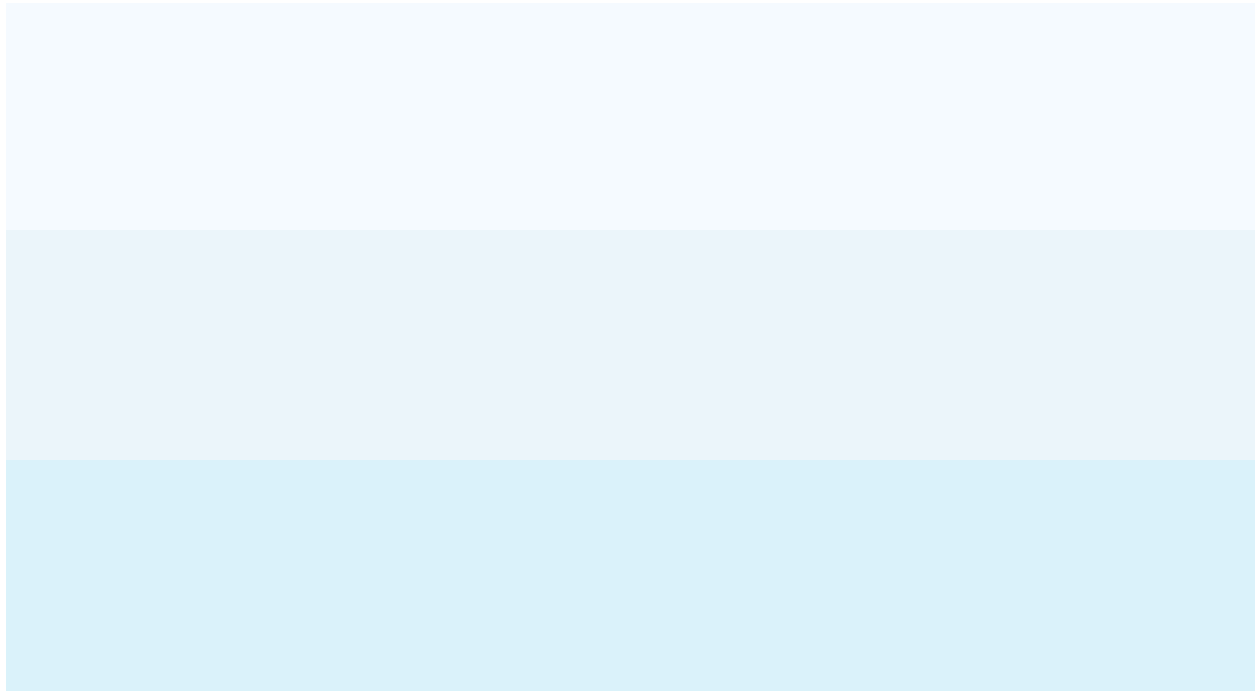


4 Zadeh, L. A. (1973). Outline of a new approach to the analysis of complex systems and decision processes. *IEEE Transactions on Systems, Man, and Cybernetics*, SMC-3(1), 28-44. doi:10.1109/TSMC.1973.5408575

5 Diamond, S. (2009, October 25). Why Myths Still Matter: Hercules and His Twelve Healing Labors. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/evil-deeds/200910/why-myths-still-matter-hercules-and-his-twelve-healing-labors>

6 Slaying the Hydra. (2018, January 27). *De Philosophia*. Retrieved from <https://dephilosophia.com/slaying-the-hydra/>

7 Apollodorus’ *Library* and Hyginus’ *Fabulae: two handbooks of Greek mythology*. Hackett Publishing, 2007.



PHASE 3

**GENERATE**

DESIGN EDUCATION CONCEPTS





# (UN)FAMILIAR TERRITORIES

What alternative futures might arise from our fresh perspective on industry and academia? How might learning environments look, feel, and function differently from today, and which human-centred motivations should they primarily serve?

## Morphological Synthesis

Compelling aspirational futures should not only showcase the powerful human truths uncovered to date but also be at once new, well-rounded, and focused. To achieve this, Morphological Synthesis, a creative problem solving technique

pioneered by astrophysicist Fritz Zwicky (Ritchey, 1998), was employed to construct unfamiliar “worlds” based on the motivations uncovered in Phase 1.

## Ideation Workshops

Laddering up from the metaphorical depths of CLA, four one-on-one workshops were held with post-secondary design educators to generate and develop innovative program concepts. Using playing cards with a motivation on the face side

(See Figure 3.1) and its corresponding colour-coded STEEPV factor on the back, participants were given all 20 cards face down and asked to randomly pick one card per colour (i.e. the lead motivation for a specific factor) to end up with six cards in total. The result is a unique world (one of 1,296 possibilities), with a set of balanced, targeted, and unbiased environmental considerations for each person to explore.

For recruitment criteria, participant profiles, and worksheets, please see Appendix F.

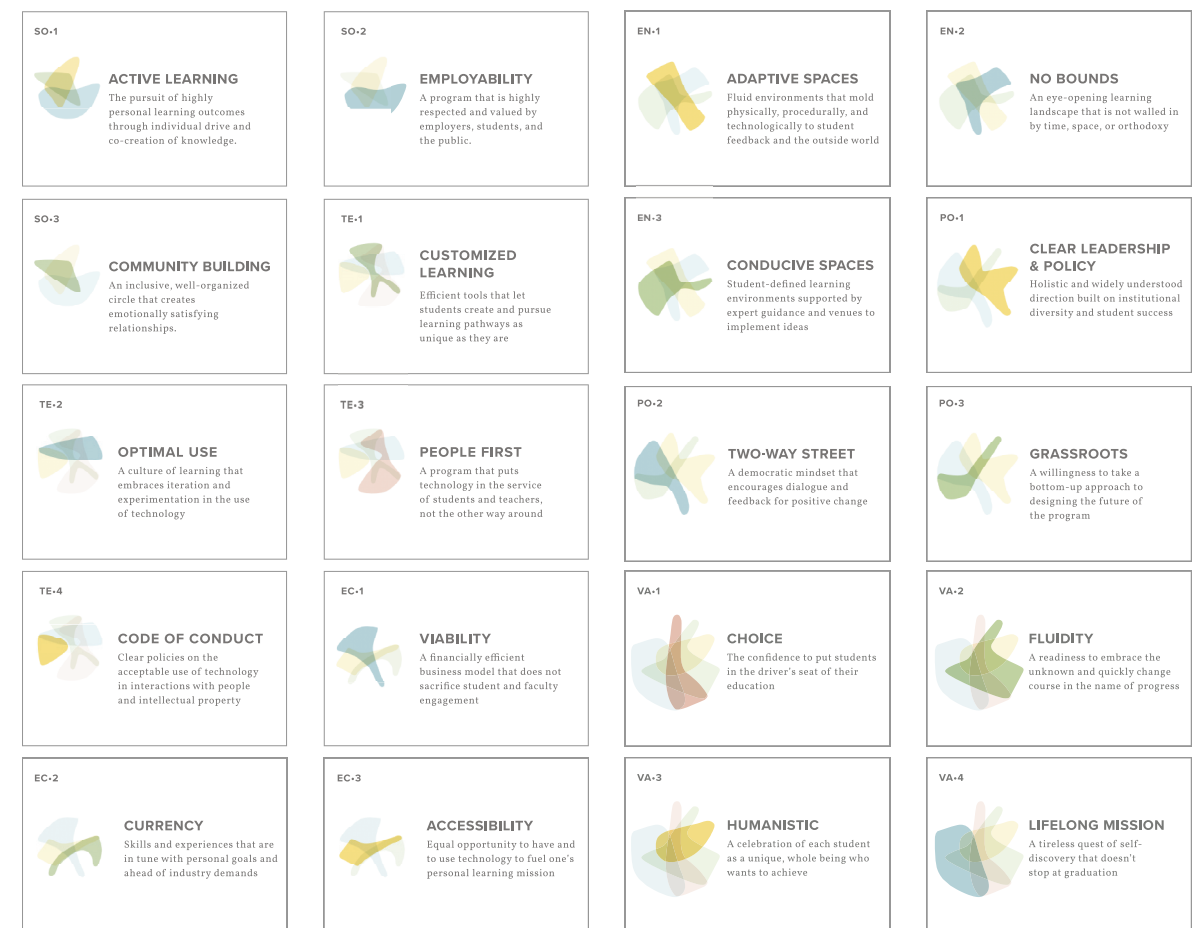


Figure 3.1: Human-Centred STEEPV Cards (Face Side)







Alternative Worlds

The workshops produced four distinct design program concepts, each with its identity driven by different motivations in combination. Figure 3.2 lists these concepts, a brief description, and the inputs that led to their creation.

Figure 3.2: Design Program Concepts

A BOT OF COFFEE

Participant CL







-  soc Community Building
-  tec Optimal Use
-  eco Accessibility
-  env Adaptive Spaces
-  pol Two-Way Street
-  val Fluidity

Open to learners from all countries and walks of life, “A Bot of Coffee” is an affordable, pay-as-you-go design program that takes place in virtual and real spaces outside of school.

Facilitated by human advisers and non-human assistants, the learning system adjusts lesson content and approach in real time as sensors interpret individual learner comprehension, mood, and feedback. “A Bot of Coffee” is incredibly social and connects design learners and leaders worldwide for dialogue, lifelong relationships, or a virtual pat on the back.

IT’S PERSONAL







Participant JT

-  soc Employability
-  tec People First
-  eco Accessibility
-  env Adaptive Spaces
-  pol Clear Leadership & Policy
-  val Humanistic

For design students who get lost in a “one-size-fits-all” system, “It’s Personal” is a virtual, on-demand environment that customizes learning goals, schedules, modes of engagement, and projects based on individual preferences. It uses technology and analytics to automatically align portfolios, course offerings, and internal budgets with employment needs and trends. To encourage the pursuit of self-defined success, “It’s Personal” rewards passion projects with tuition subsidies in exchange for design research.

ENLIGHTENMENT







Participant JA

-  soc Community Building
-  tec People First
-  eco Currency
-  env No Bounds
-  pol Grassroots
-  val Lifelong Mission

For design students who march to the beat of their own drum, “Enlightenment” is a one-on-one learning system grounded in self-discovery, fit, and knowledge acquisition, not marks. Gurus (industry experts and long-time students) are matched with learners according to their interest, learning style, and personality. Based on the ingenuity displayed by the student in workshops and practical challenges, gurus personalize programs and guide students in applying new lessons to real-life design dilemmas. Students never graduate from “Enlightenment”. Instead, they learn for life and become increasingly better versions of themselves for personal and industry gain.

COLLABORATION COLLEGE

Participant RA

-  soc Community Building
-  tec Optimal Use
-  eco Currency
-  env Adaptive Spaces
-  pol Two-Way Street
-  val Fluidity

For students who enjoy diversity and working in groups, “Collaboration College” is an online program built around interdisciplinary teams, complementary skills, and partner institutions. Designers and non-designers are matched and brought together remotely or in person to prototype solutions to real-world problems hackathon-style. Facilitators promote a cooperative and positive environment, while strategic alliances with outside faculties, other higher-education institutions, and industry nurture adaptable designers who are “project-lead ready” as soon as they graduate.

Finding the Right Fit

Acknowledging that a range of equally creative solutions exist, this research now seeks to converge for depth and detail by advancing one of the four concepts presented in the preceding pages as a means of sparking a conversation for change in post-secondary design education and, closer to home, elevating the program I am redesigning and coordinating at Sheridan College. Which one of these ideas has the strongest potential to open the doors of discussion and, importantly, on what basis?

Strategic Alignment as Key Criterion

Oftentimes, even the best-intentioned proposals hit a wall when they are deemed “off strat.” Indeed, conflicting priorities, lack of buy-in, concerns over resource misallocation, workplace redundancies, and unclear contextual purpose are organizational hurdles that can easily thwart fledgling initiatives. It is, therefore, imperative to not only recognize long-term plans but also deliberately set strategic fit as a major qualifier in our evaluation of alternative concepts.

In the case of Sheridan College, it has pinpointed five “Strategy Hives,” major thrusts that it hopes will position the school for competitive success in the next five years. Per its communication “Sheridan 2024: Defining Our Future” (released well into this MRP), the college offers the following goals and development areas that can (and should) now be taken into account:

Figure 3.3: “Sheridan 2024” Strategic Objectives



With these strategic objectives in mind, how do our four alternatives stack up? Figure 3.4 offers an empirical assessment of fit by looking at how directly each concept and its salient features feed the college’s various strategic thrusts.

Figure 3.4: Gauging Strength of Concept Alignment to “Sheridan 2024” Strategy

“Sheridan 2024” Strategic Objectives	A Bot of Coffee	It’s Personal	Enlightenment	Collaboration College
Foster agility for the future	◐	○	◐	◐
Invent the “learningspace” and workspace of the future	●	◐	●	○
Invent through collaboration with cities and industry	●	○	◐	●
Offer a truly inclusive, globally aware student experience	●	○	●	●
Have processes, infrastructure, and space to fully enable Sheridan 2024	●	●	◐	◐

●

 Strongly / directly supports strategy

◐

 Somewhat / indirectly supports

○

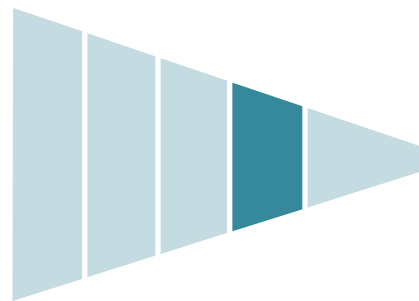
 Poorly supports

Choosing a Concept to Develop

Based on the above criteria, one alternative world rose above the others and dovetailed more tightly into Sheridan College’s strategic priorities. Coincidentally, it also stood out in the workshops for its cohesiveness, imaginative use of technology, and clarity of intent. The following section unpacks our winning concept: **A Bot of Coffee**.



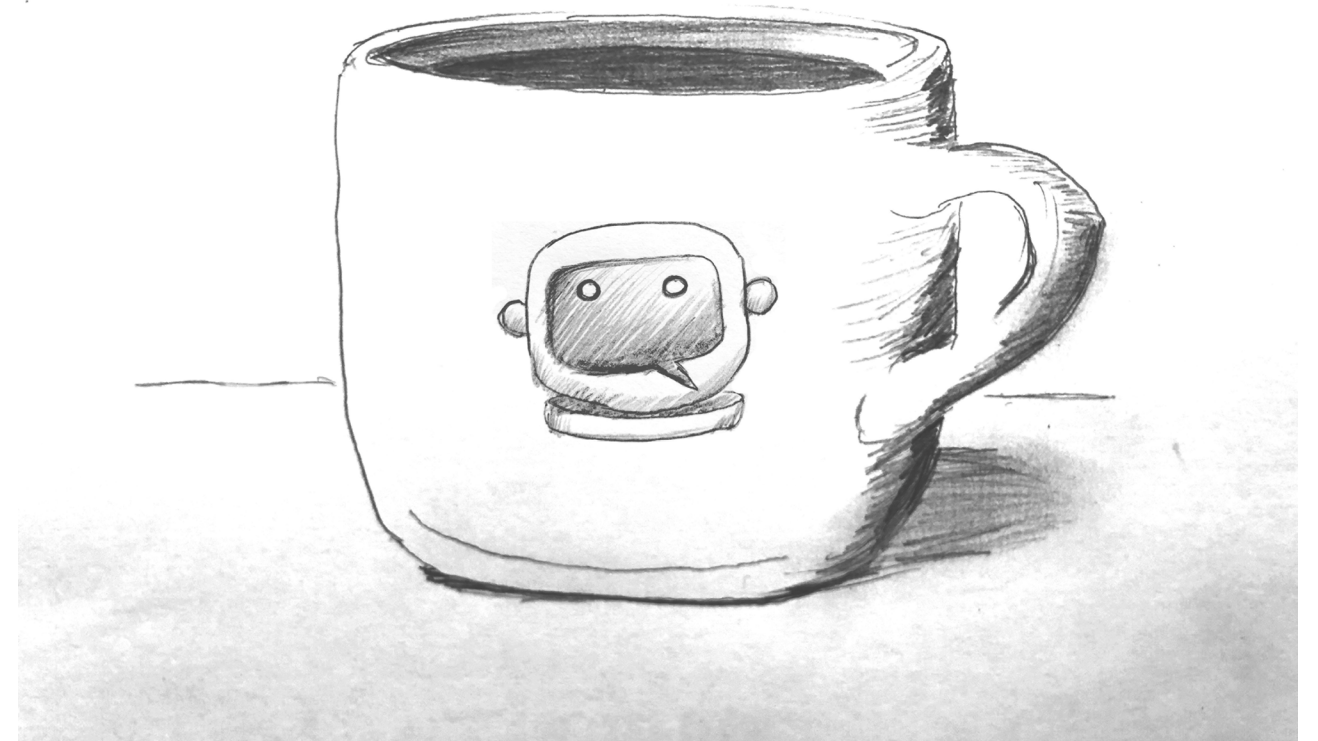




PHASE 4

## REFINE

THE CONCEPT

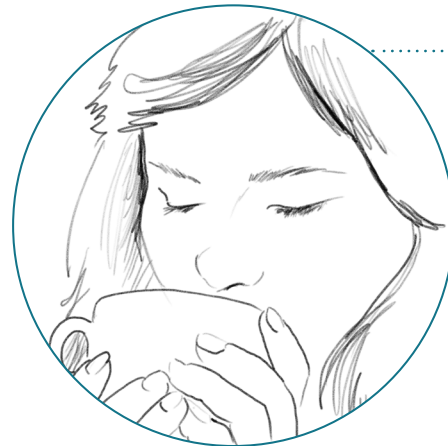


# A BOT OF COFFEE

## *Taking a bigger sip*

How might A Bot of Coffee operate in the future? This section builds on the CLA and ideation workshop results by illustrating a “slice of life,” lending physical form to the motivations, key concepts, and insights at the heart of this idea. More explicitly, it seeks to (1) contextualize A Bot of Coffee

as a human-centred solution, (2) visualize its moving parts, (3) bring to the fore required investments or partnerships, (4) serve as a gut check for validity, and (5) compose a narrative for communicating the new.



*Nara has a zen moment before her module begins.*



*A global and affordable virtual learning environment*

## Use Case Scenario

Nara walks into her neighbourhood café ready to start learning. She likes the laid back, lazy feel of a Sunday afternoon and feels it is the perfect time to start her new module. With her tech in one hand and favourite beverage in the other, she is fully armed as she takes her usual spot at the communal study table.

She is excited to start her new module. At the price of a cup of coffee a day, why not? Rather than the mammoth tuition commitments of old, the price of learning is much friendlier with a pay-as-you-go model. Nara recalls the orientation pitch that got her into the Digital Product Design program:

*From the comfort of a local coffee house, the Digital Product Design program offers always-on Learning In Virtual Environments (or LIVE) with a global perspective. For the price of a cup of coffee a day, students from around the world cover foundational topics such as human factors, empathic design, design strategy, sustainable design, user experience design, and evidence-based design; collaborate with like-minded peers; and partner with industry to work on real-world projects. Your learning isn't time-boxed. You learn when and for how long you want. Plus, LIVE senses and adjusts to your comprehension and feedback, allowing you to learn at your pace.*

Nara really values learning on her terms and how the program is accessible to all. Paying a little more for her modules helps ensure the LIVE virtual glasses are distributed to underserved areas.

The LIVE learning trend is certainly not her mother's academic experience. In fact, Nara just read another article on the enrolment freefall in traditional academia. The fixed pace, one-size-fits-all education certainly doesn't appeal to her generation.

As she takes a sip of her dark-roast coffee, she puts on her LIVE glasses and enters a personalized virtual learning environment. Since it is the first day of the new module, Nara is a little nervous. The LIVE virtual environment senses that and changes her default techno "wallpaper" environment to an ambient one. That's better, she thinks.

Her new session focuses on Sustainable Design. This is a perfect subject for Nara. Ever since she was young, she tinkered with things, trying to make them last just a little longer. Why throw them in the waste? Given the fragile state of the planet, she wants to make things better and for a greater good. Finally, she will be in her element and dig into discussions with others who feel the same way!

She turns to see a few classmates joining her at the café's communal table. She greets Jakob and Li, fellow classmates and now friends from a previous session. A few others just join virtually, and she looks forward to making new acquaintances. That's the benefit of coming out to the Learning Perks coffee shop: you get to virtually collaborate with people from afar as well as peers you know locally.

Waiting for her module to start, she recalls the last one she took, Evidence-Based Design. It was more challenging than anything she



*Nara is comfortable and completely immersed in LIVE*



*Nara chats with her peers about their last module*



Advisor Akilah offers industry insider knowledge to Nara virtually



Meaningful discussion inspires Nara to start designing

had taken before, and it was the first time she missed any achievement badges. LIVE sensed the puzzled looks Nara had with readings from her Analytics modules, so PROF-BOT came to the rescue, slowed down the pace, engaged her in banter on the subject matter, and successfully unblocked her cognitive bottleneck. It also didn't hurt that she booked (on PROF-BOT's suggestion) a few sessions with her in-real-life Advisor Akilah, who guided her with creative ways of approaching her Analytics assignment. Those "power-ups" surely helped her get to the next achievement level.

Back to Nara's virtual LIVE class, Advisor Akilah introduces herself and lets the class know that she is available for collaborative sessions. PROF-BOT takes over, presenting recent research to guide the discussion on frugal innovation. A few students from remote/underserved areas of India chime in, offering a compelling take on their conditions due to limited water resources. This provides Nara with a new perspective. Her tinkering had always been about extending the life of her tech gadgets, not making daily life more manageable for other people.

Inspired by the discussion, Nara finds herself sketching out a mixed-reality screen interface that detects optimal watering for crops. That's the thing with this program, Nara muses—it really infects you with curiosity. She tries a few more rounds of sketches to see what her peers think. Peer feedback happens so naturally in this program. She

values their opinion since they are the smartest people she knows.

Without realizing it, she is on her way to completing her first assignment for the Iterative Design module. She notices this later as she browses the tasks on tomorrow's agenda. She looks forward to starting that module. That iterative nature of design is what engages her—a venue that rewards experimentation is perfect for her tinkering disposition.

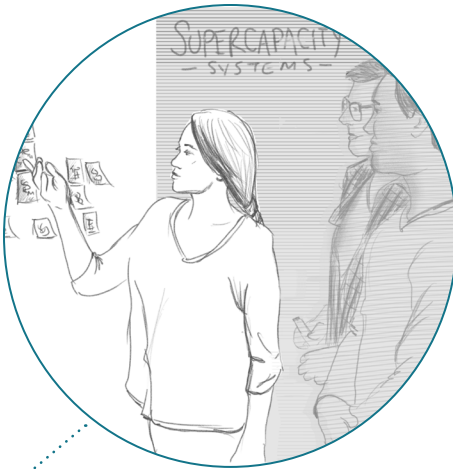
After having lunch in the west end with Jakob and Li from the morning class, Nara decides to go for the introduction to Product Design Workshop module in a Learning Perks coffee shop just a block away.

It appears that the project with Supercapacity Systems is the right fit. Judging from the kick-off meeting, the company really values her thoughts and suggestions on their newest product upgrade and expects her to take the lead! Given their own interest in sustainability and her desire to sharpen her skills, it is sure to be a fulfilling collaborative experience.

Looking ahead to next week, she can't wait to try Design Industry Virtual Environment (DIVE) simulator, a trial run for a few weeks before her real-life industry placement. Nara hears that advisors work with industry to design the simulations, and they aren't shy about throwing in some chaos and unanticipated curveballs. Recent graduates note that the experience is arduous at first, but everyone raves about the gains: resilience and a definite boost to emotional intelli-



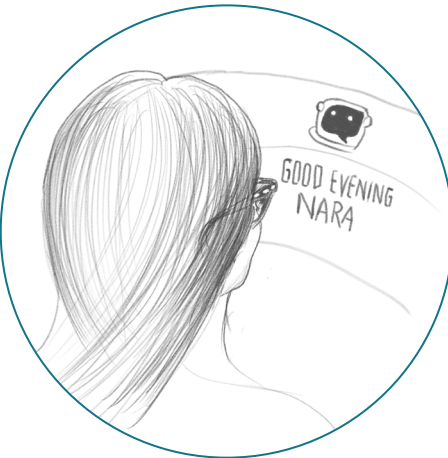
Nara listens to peer feedback and reworks her design



Nara contributes to solving a real-world problem in DIVE



*Nara processes everything she learned today*



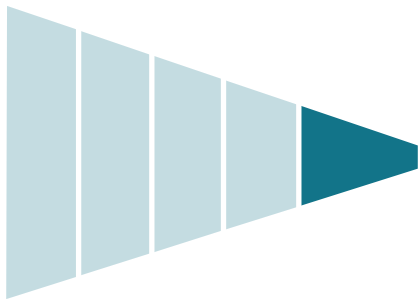
*Nara asks PROF-BOT (who never sleeps) one last question for the day*

gence. They say the secret lies in trusting and using the methods PROF-BOT covers in class.

And it's not just students who benefit. Advisor Akilah immersed herself in an industry partnership earlier this year, and Nara noticed how invigorated her Advisor was when speaking about her collaboration. Current industry experience really shows at their advising sessions.

On her commute home, Nara is determined to realize the app idea she had earlier in the day. A passion project she has every intention of making a real project! She's happy how everything came together and will ask Jakob and Li if they'd be interested in collaborating with her

As the evening arrives, Nara, a self-described night owl, has an urge to chime in from her mobile device for one last short burst of learning. She is able to connect from the comfort of her couch. One of the perks of an always-on system is that sessions run all day with advisors from different parts of the world. She gets an answer to her query and can now rest, ready to tackle what tomorrow has in store.



PHASE 5  
**ACTIVATE**  
THE FUTURE





# FROM UNICORN TO REALITY

Now that the conceptual building blocks for reimagining design education have assumed a prototypical form, what (and whom) would it take to move A Bot of Coffee closer to fruition?

### Identifying Stakeholders

As a first step, it is critical to identify the parties who can materially impact and be impacted by A Bot of Coffee’s rollout. From a design thinking standpoint, they represent the bases whose needs and wants have to be

considered. From the more pragmatic lens of change management, they are likely to be the most entrenched and “squeakiest” parties through (or around) which program change must occur. Who are emblematic of design education today?

Schools /Admin	Governing bodies and administrators at higher-education institutions offering design programs
Instructional Techs	Technologists who select and maintain the learning management systems (LMS), computer software, and equipment for design labs and studio classrooms
Students	Learners and their peers at college or university design programs (undergraduate and graduate)
Educators	Professors of college or university design programs (undergraduate and graduate)
Tech Industry	Developers of education learning management systems (LMS) as well as hardware and software used in the design field
Private Sector / Employers	Companies, design studios, agencies, and in-house design departments
Unions	Association of school employees formed to protect and further the rights and interests of its members
Government	Ministry responsible for educational funding, policies, grants
Family, Friends	Learner’s immediate personal circle
Social Media	User-generated content on various online platforms, virtual communities, and networks

Visualizing Influence

Given the major players in current design academia, where does influence lie vis-à-vis A Bot of Coffee’s fundamental attributes? Who has the authority to legitimize or restrict change, and where else could their influence be utilized to push this alternative future forward?

Influence Maps

To answer these questions and (more boldly) put a “face” to major issues and opportunities, the

motivations, levers, and tensions from HCS were mapped back in full context to the stakeholder(s) most strongly associated with them by thought leaders and interviewees from Phase 1 as well as my professional experiences as a designer, program administrator, and design educator at Sheridan College. At first blush, the myriad connections between the various stakeholders and drivers of design education weave an expectedly tangled web of interests and accountabilities (See Figure 5.1).

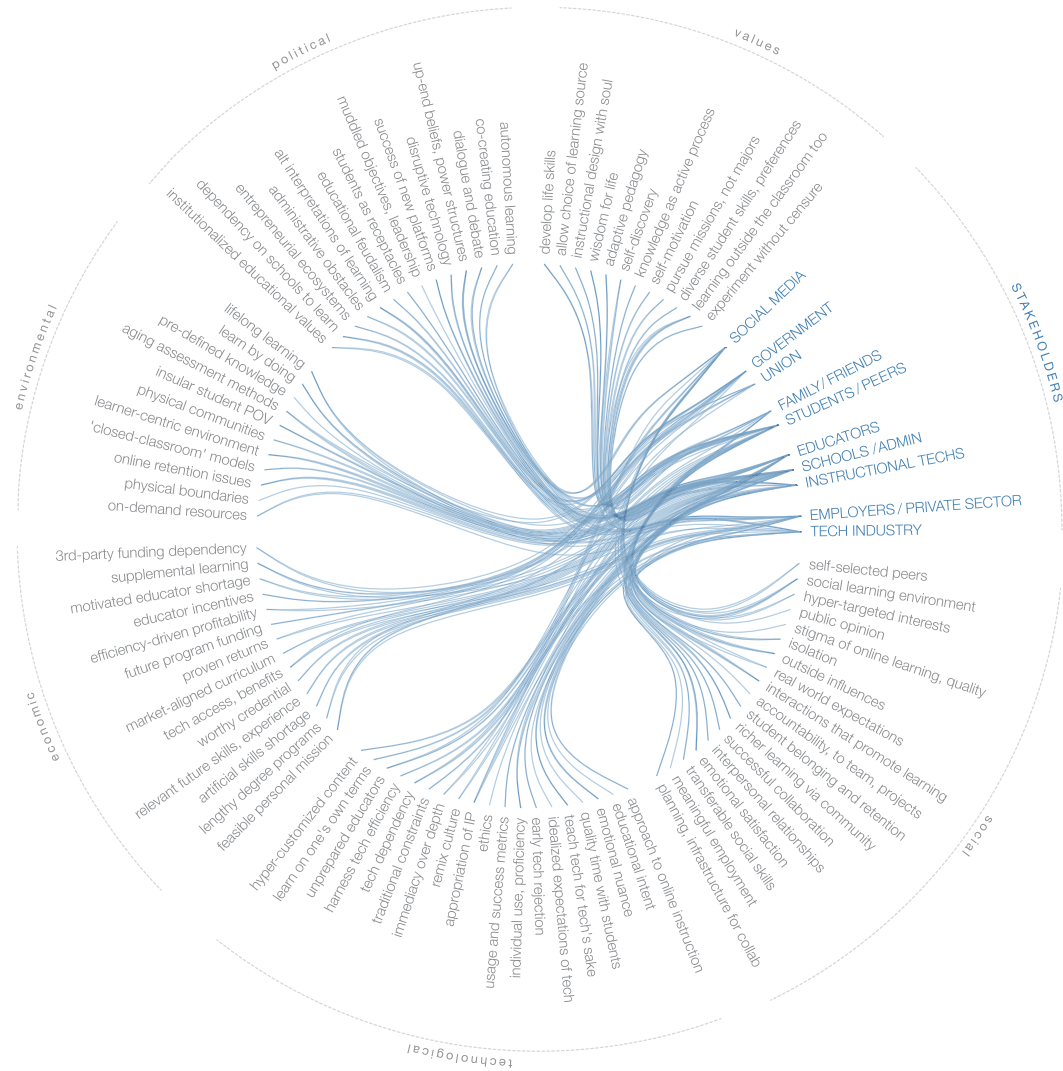


Figure 5.1: Key Stakeholders and Their Influence on Design Education

Isolating each stakeholder, however, paints a much more interesting picture. Supporting the notion that academia is an “ivory tower”, Figure 5.2 shows that power and influence mainly reside in three players: Schools / Admin, Educators, and Students / Peers

— visually the only stakeholders to touch (either positively or negatively) some aspect of each major factor, thereby suggesting that current design education is by and large shaped by this omnipresent triumvirate of influence.

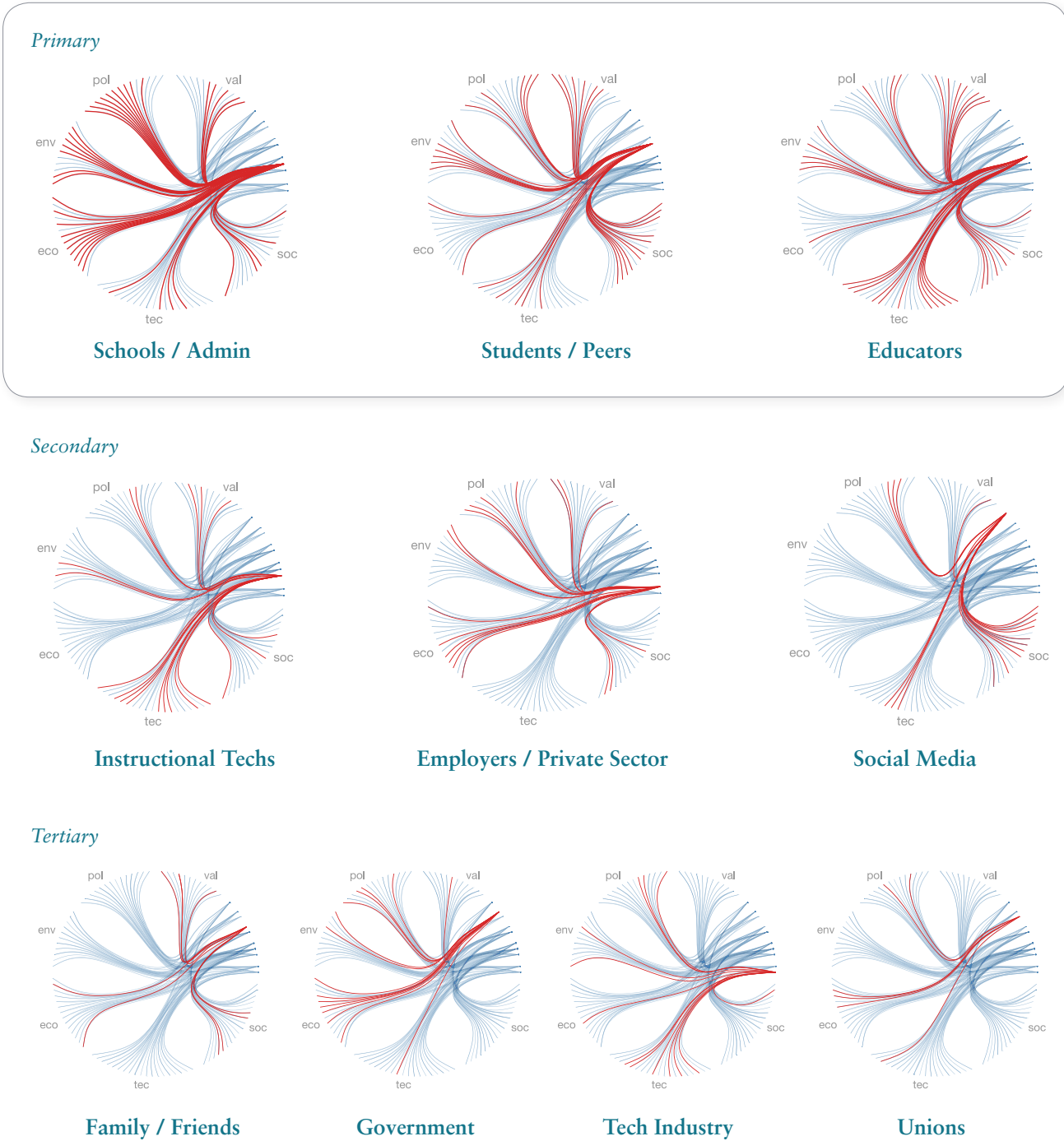


Figure 5.2: Individual Stakeholder Influence on Design Education

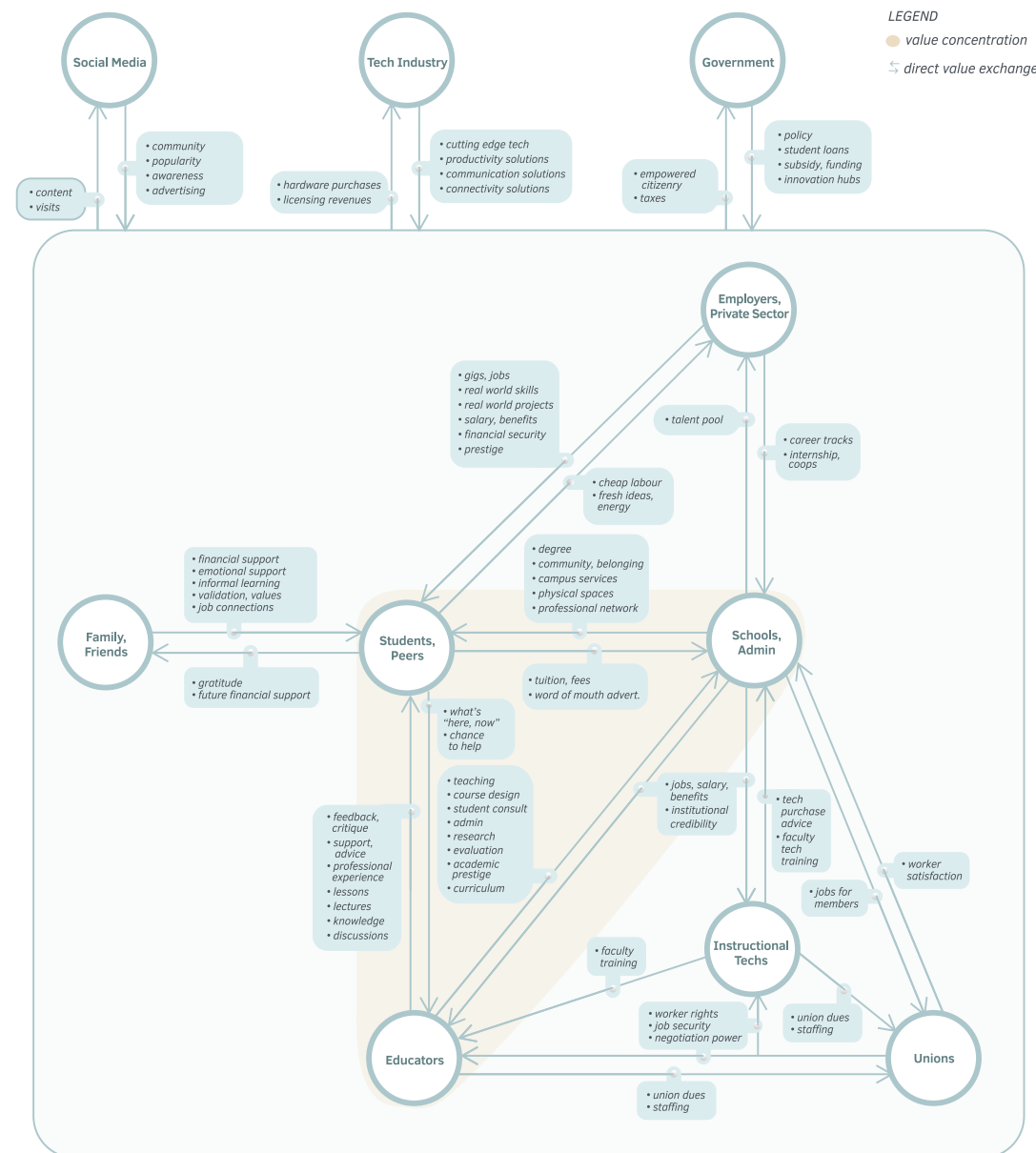


## Partnering for Success and Value Creation

For A Bot of Coffee to close the gap between design industry and academia, it must break the self-referential triangle of school, teacher, and student to incorporate

stakeholders who lie outside the sphere of studying, offer tremendous value, and may have thus far been underused (or worse, misused). Rather than coordinating diverse

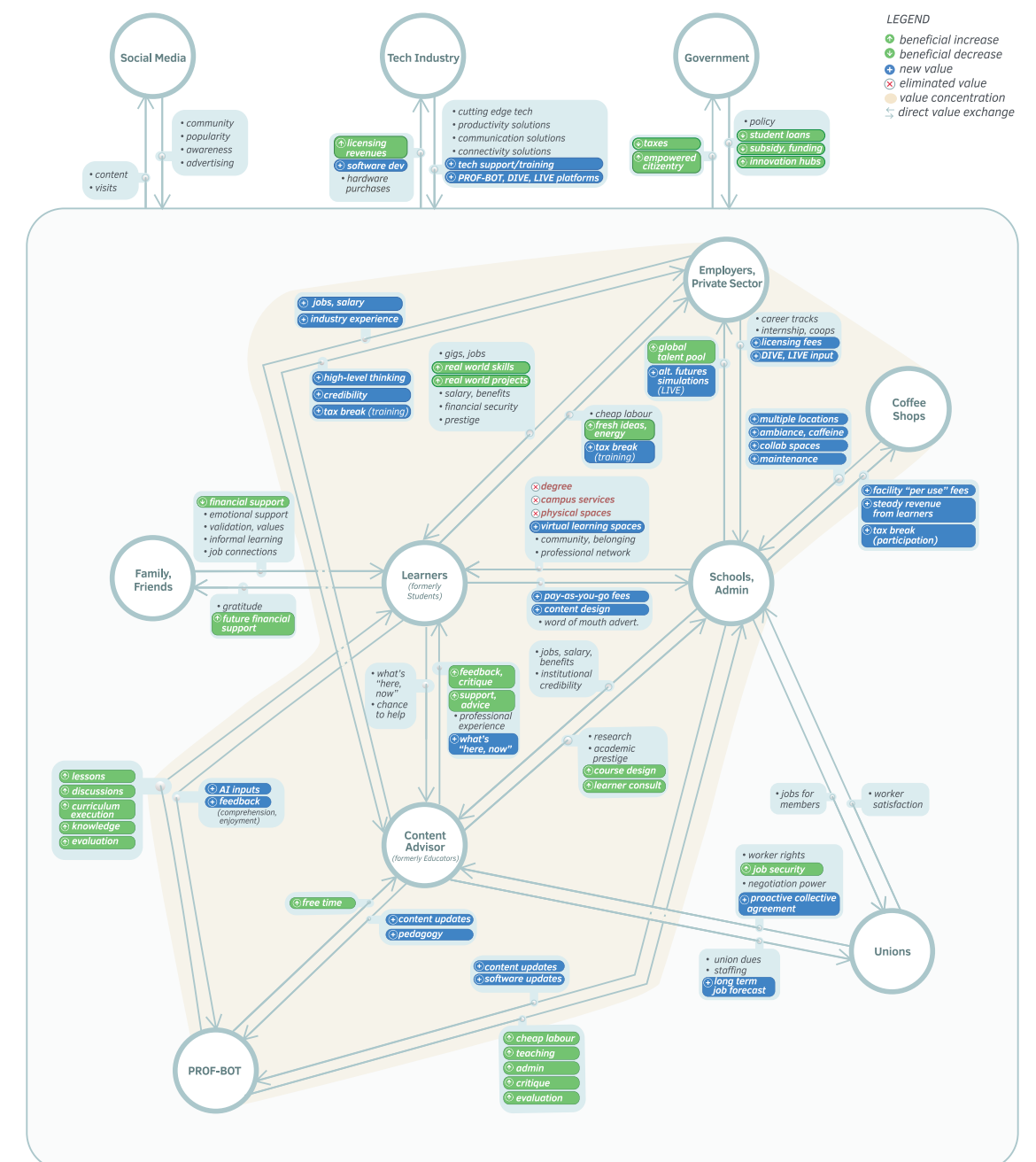
Figure 5.3: Current Value Web



stakeholders to manage complexity, striking new partnerships to incite change and create new value will be instrumental in getting A Bot of Coffee off the ground.

Given the significance of A Bot of Coffee's departure from the status quo, new investments, infrastructure, and working relationships will necessarily arise. With whom

Figure 5.4: Proposed Value Web



and for which components should schools partner? What types of value exchanges might these new partnerships entail? Figure 5.3 illustrates the familiar value web of post-secondary design education today, where tuition, knowledge, and academic infrastructure change hands in a closed loop. From this vantage point, one can see how enabling the current setup can be in perpetuating the misguided belief that students are low-value receptacles (i.e. receive but don't contribute), design educators teach because they can't do, and schools institutionalize learning for financial gain.

In contrast, Figure 5.4 puts forth a more robust, differently-connected value web driven by A Bot of Coffee. In this alternative future, (1) non-human players enter the mix to introduce value; (2) active private sector integration synchronizes academia with industry; (3) learners are equipped to generate value earlier in the process; (4) new revenue streams promote self-sufficiency; and (5) re-assignment or elimination of values result in qualitative wins and financial efficiencies. How might we realize this re-imagined value proposition?



**From Educator to Content Advisor**  
*Shifting Educators away from course delivery and administration towards industry-based learning design and individual counsel*



**Campus to Go**  
*Unloading schools' physical real estate to fund virtual spaces that are fully immersive, learner-selected, and decentralized*



**Experience U**  
*Realistic virtual environment that simulates industry challenges for learner and private sector readiness*



**The Rise of Prof-Bot**  
*Delegating content delivery, discussion topics, and time-consuming tasks to non-human learning assistants*

Figure 5.5: Turning Points (A Bot of Coffee)

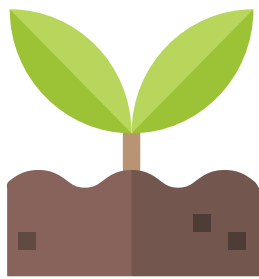
Deconstructing the Nara-tive

Nara’s learning future hinges on four turning points - mission critical “buckets of change” that are directly linked to particular aspects of our new value story and require leadership, planning, and change management to move forward. Figure 5.5 outlines these turning points. The next section proposes a high-level

road map (from the school’s point of view) for activating each of these four turning points and moving A Bot of Coffee closer to reality. Built around the elements listed in Figure 5.6, it offers a considered initial structure to how we might think about and communicate the new for maximum acceptance and implementation.

Key Activators	“Must haves” that define the turning point
Main Objectives	Principal goals, gains to which all activities must ladder back
Partners	Parties to engage, who own resources we need / do not have
Securing Buy-in	Communicating what’s in it for partners, stakeholders
Potential Pitfalls	Watch-outs that may derail the turning point and should be anticipated
Measurement	Key performance indicators to build in, monitor, gauge success
Milestones	Important steps to take and celebrate when achieved
School Readiness	Areas to work on or leverage (money, mindset, politics, technology)
Value Context	Principal relationships that produce value

Figure 5.6: Key Elements of High-Level Road Map



# From Educator to CONTENT ADVISOR

Shifting Educators away from course delivery and administration towards industry-based learning design and individual counsel

WHAT'S NEEDED	TO GAIN WHAT	PARTNER WITH	TO CHANGE WHAT	INTO WHAT	SO WHAT
Educators with current industry experience	▶ Leading-edge program in tune with industry trends, challenges  Better-prepared, relevant graduates	▶ Private Sector (industry insight) Educators (professional experience / gaps)	▶ Few full-time faculty work outside the college, so dated knowhow, stale content transferred to students	▶ Learners have, apply the latest industry insight from their project consultations	▶ Work with industry to train educators who lack the latest skills for a part-time move back to the workplace
Educators who excel at conceptualizing, making, advising (not just teaching)	▶ Authentic programs by designers for designers  Quality check-in time with learners	▶ Unions (new job descriptions) Educators (new responsibilities)	▶ Uninspired educators have little say on role evolution Reactive unions protect current jobs	▶ Educators time, expertise put to more stimulating, higher-value use Proactive unions protect future roles	▶ Consult unions, educators on new job descriptions, requirements, benefits Revise educator selection, retention criteria

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

MILESTONE 1	MILESTONE 2	MILESTONE 3	MILESTONE 4	MILESTONE 5	MILESTONE 6
Consult union, new collective agreement	Inventory faculty skills, skill gaps	Seek industry partners willing to upskill faculty	Pilot faculty industry placement	Placed faculty source industry projects	Advisors design, adapt modules, learner counsel around industry expertise

## POTENTIAL PITFALLS

### Industry Support / Availability

Private sector sees faculty as book-smart burden, cannot have new staff, do not have right roles

**Fail-safe:** Variety of potential roles, skills swap

### Union Resistance

Union takes tough stance on new role, initiates a lengthy labour disruption

**Fail-safe:** Early, frequent consultation with union

### Unwilling Educators

Educators refuse to intern, disrupt routine, work more, be evaluated for skills / experience gaps

**Fail-safe:** Paid training, no salary reduction

## COMMUNICATING FOR BUY-IN

### Educators

Paid industry exposure, future-proof skills, new research opportunities, job security, more interesting use of time, creative challenge

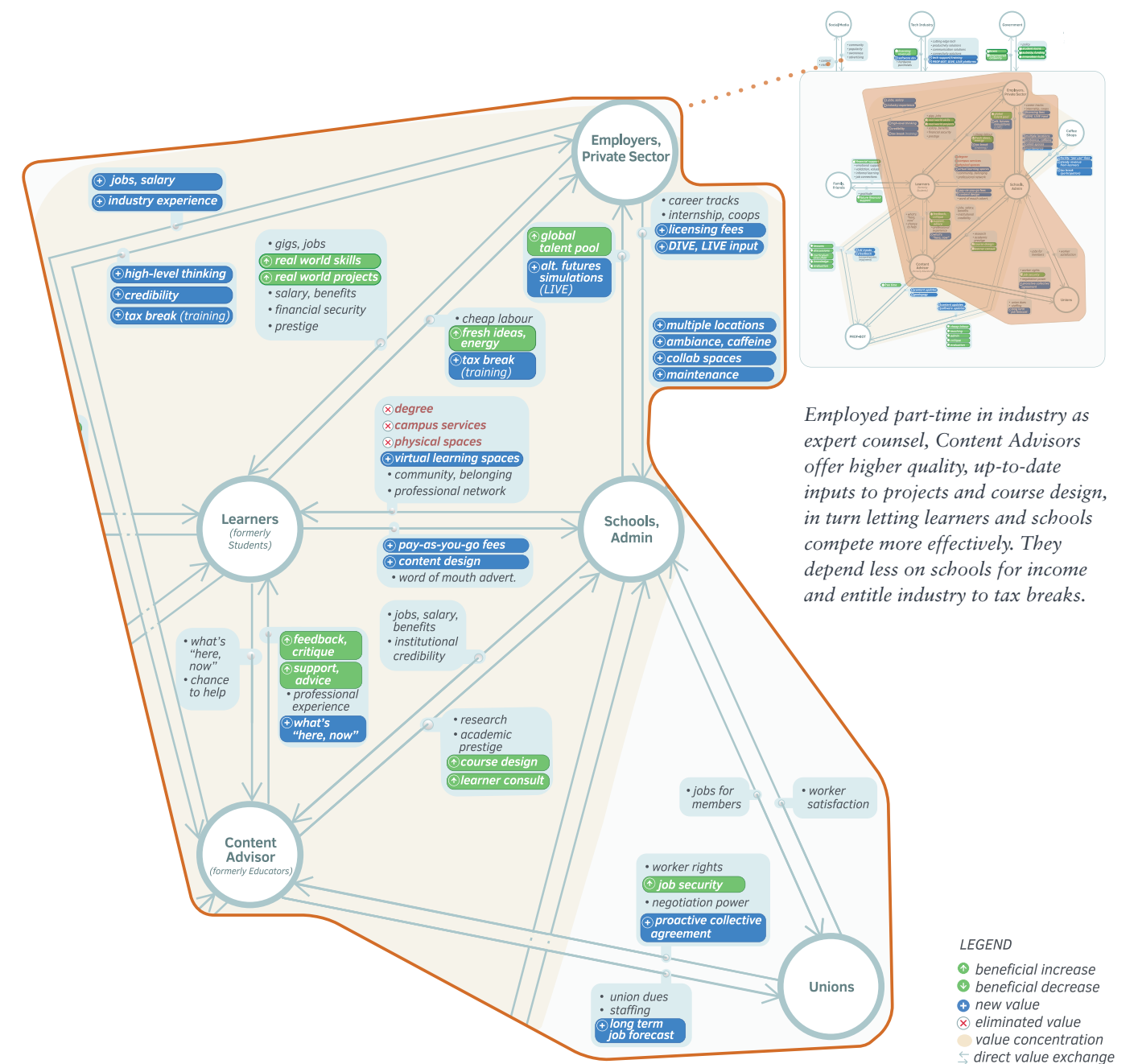
### Private Sector

Experienced pool of respected high-level thinkers, insider access to top learner talent, corporate social responsibility

### Unions

Upskilling ensures educator longevity, getting ahead of tech disruption to protect members, higher quality work life

## VALUE CONTEXT



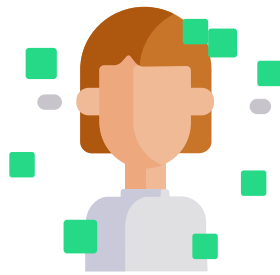
Employed part-time in industry as expert counsel, Content Advisors offer higher quality, up-to-date inputs to projects and course design, in turn letting learners and schools compete more effectively. They depend less on schools for income and entitle industry to tax breaks.

## SCHOOL READINESS METER

Mindset	<div></div>	Politics	<div></div>
Money	<div></div>	Technology	<div></div>

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

• Advice Quality	• Advice Quantity	• Learner Retention
• Placement Evaluation	• Mastery of Industry Challenge	



# Vicarious EXPERIENCE U

Realistic virtual environment that simulates industry challenges for learner and private sector readiness

WHAT'S NEEDED	TO GAIN WHAT	PARTNER WITH	TO CHANGE WHAT	INTO WHAT	SO WHAT
Simulated alternative futures for private sector planning, training	Integration of global private sector, academia in real world projects  B2B income stream from licensing	Government (oversight, funding, resources)  Private Sector (industry projects)	Students don't get enough meaty, wicked "real-world" projects, academia not seen as solution to industry problems	Private sector seeks learners to co-develop alternative futures, industry-specific simulations based on LIVE's deep learning platform	Manage legalities of licensing, intellectual property rights, agreements  Protect academic freedom when working with private sector
Design industry virtual environment (DIVE) simulator	Differentiating design industry simulation offering, global "plug and play" learners	Private Sector (industry exposure)  Tech Industry (digital development)	Students are unprepared for design workplace realities	Learners experience a virtual trial of a full project in fast-paced design industry, choose their best-fit internship environment	Document a variety of challenging design studio environments, workflows to simulate  Train educators who maintain, contribute to simulation platform

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

MILESTONE 1	MILESTONE 2	MILESTONE 3	MILESTONE 4	MILESTONE 5	MILESTONE 6	MILESTONE 7
Consult digital content, government, private sector partners	Develop engines for Design Industry Virtual Environment (DIVE), Learning in Virtual Environments (LIVE)	Create virtual design studio, industry-specific environments	Prototype, test, revise simulations	Students work iteratively with partners on pilot project	Update DIVE, LIVE based on pilot	Launch regional, global trials

## POTENTIAL PITFALLS

### Output Integrity

Industry interprets licensing agreements as ownership of work and unilaterally dictates scope, parameters, ethics

**Fail-safe:** Partnership rules of engagement

### Bad Simulations

Design workplace, private sector issues are misrepresented, not thought through, cast doubt on value of simulations

**Fail-safe:** Vetting process, quality data input, futures training

### No Industry Participation

Design industry, private sector doubt ROI, lack time, refuse to share competitive advantages / concerns / ugly side of business and withhold their support

**Fail-safe:** Non-disclosure agreement (NDA), success stories, tax break

## COMMUNICATING FOR BUY-IN

### Government

Stimulate economic growth, innovative job growth initiative will satisfy voters, tax breaks for industry participation will quell "brain drain"

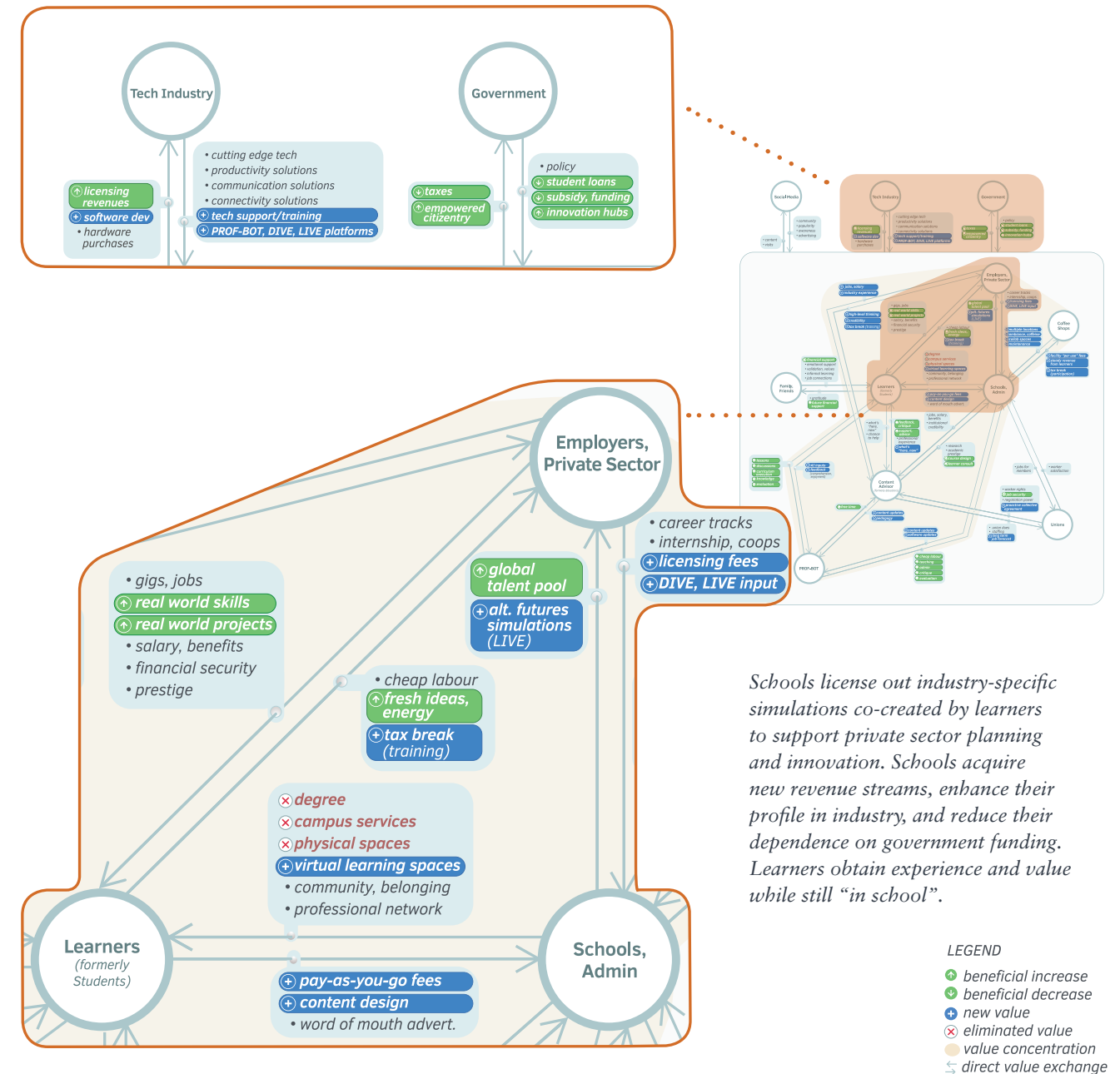
### Private Sector

Hire from global talent pool of experientially-trained candidates, prestige as community partner, investor in education, minimal risk, better decision-making, futures-based training, latest tech, corporate social responsibility

### Tech Industry

Multi-year service agreement, prestige of developing unique platform, corporate social responsibility

## VALUE CONTEXT



## SCHOOL READINESS METER

Mindset	<div></div>	Politics	<div></div>
Money	<div></div>	Technology	<div></div>

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

• Tightness of Simulations	• Licensing Revenue	• Employer Satisfaction
• Workplace Skills Acquisition	• Employment Rate	• Planning, Training Effectiveness





# Convenient CAMPUS TO GO

Unloading schools' physical real estate to fund virtual spaces that are fully immersive, learner-selected, and decentralized

WHAT'S NEEDED	TO GAIN WHAT	PARTNER WITH	TO CHANGE WHAT	INTO WHAT	SO WHAT
Non-school-owned physical collaboration hubs in convenient locations worldwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Freed-up capital to invest in the development of hyper-responsive virtual spaces</li><li>▶ Satisfying in-person human contact in informal settings</li></ul>	▶ Private Sector (Banks, Coffee Shops, Commercial Realty)	▶ Schools have acres of campus space that impede learning due to distance, centralized location, disrepair	▶ Physical learning spaces inside cool, relaxed, well-maintained coffee shops everywhere	▶ Seek suitable buyer of campus real estate
A variety of school-owned multi-person VR learning environments (LIVE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Collaborative, immersive, experiential learning regardless of location</li></ul>	▶ Tech Industry (Digital Content Developers, Virtual Environment, Wearable Hardware Developers)	▶ Sterile classroom environment is uncreative, isolated. VR is limited to student recruitment, not design learning	▶ Digital content developers create experiential learning environments not tied to any one physical location	▶ Anticipate potentially complex rezoning laws
					▶ Pitch coffee shop chain to host learners
					Determine optimal portfolio of virtual environments to propose and fund

## MAKING IT HAPPEN



## POTENTIAL PITFALLS

### Customer complaints

Regular cafe customers are irritated by commotion, walk away

**Fail-safe:** Learner code of conduct

### Unattractive real estate

Location, type of buildings are difficult to sell

**Fail-safe:** Urban planning proposal

### Peer availability

Scheduling flexibility results in unpredictable attendance, no one to collaborate with

**Fail-safe:** Collaboration scheduling request app

## COMMUNICATING FOR BUY-IN

### Private Sector (Coffee Shops)

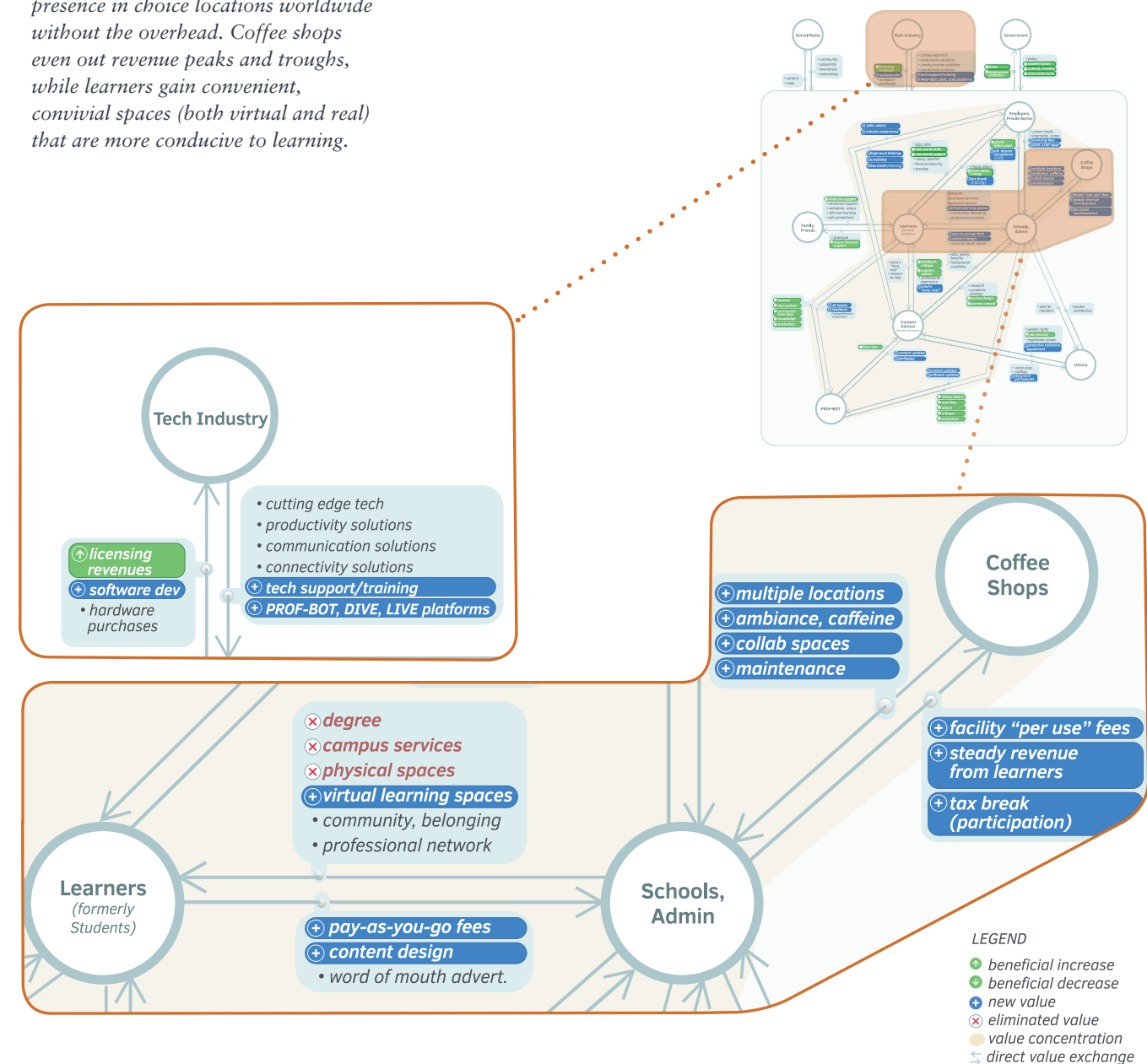
Steady stream of paying customers, tax breaks for supporting education initiative, corporate social responsibility, mature and self-motivated learners

### Tech Industry

Multi-year service agreement, prestige of developing unique platform, corporate social responsibility

## VALUE CONTEXT

Schools augment their physical presence in choice locations worldwide without the overhead. Coffee shops even out revenue peaks and troughs, while learners gain convenient, convivial spaces (both virtual and real) that are more conducive to learning.



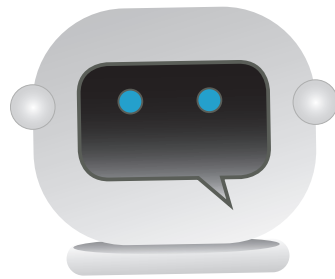
## SCHOOL READINESS METER



## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Comprehension
- Attendance
- Retention
- Quality of Virtual Environments
- Learner Enjoyment





# The Rise of PROF-BOT

*Delegating content delivery, discussion topics, and time-consuming tasks to non-human learning assistants*

WHAT'S NEEDED	TO GAIN WHAT	PARTNER WITH	TO CHANGE WHAT	INTO WHAT	SO WHAT
<b>Artificial Intelligence that effectively assesses, adjusts to individual student comprehension</b>	▶ <b>Real-time feedback</b> that satisfies student quandaries <b>without costly instructor hours</b>	▶ <b>Tech Industry</b> (AI hardware, software) <b>Educators</b> (art and science of pedagogy)	▶ <b>Not all students learn at the same pace</b> , so some are left behind while others are bored	▶ <b>Students are engaged in their own time without consequences</b>	▶ <b>Tighten standards of student privacy</b> <b>Change interim performance evaluation criteria</b> from standardized to individual
<b>Virtual educator that curates content, facilitates discussions with emotional nuance</b>	▶ <b>Human-like substitute</b> that is more effective at <b>holding student interest</b> than traditional multimedia aids	▶ <b>Tech Industry</b> (AI hardware, software) <b>Educators</b> (art and science of pedagogy)	▶ <b>Current instructional media is static</b> , dry, lacks personality Chatbots are easily gamed, do not get cultural references	▶ <b>Students feel that they are interacting with a fellow human at all times</b>	▶ <b>Organize consultation</b> , free trials with PROF-BOT to minimize backlash from traditionalists and build confidence in the technology

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

MILESTONE 1	MILESTONE 2	MILESTONE 3	MILESTONE 4	MILESTONE 5	MILESTONE 6	MILESTONE 7
Consult instructional techs, educators, admin, global partners on learning, criteria	Develop AI engine, sensors for learner comprehension	Create PROF-BOT personality matrix, content, evaluation rubric	Build initial prototypes, user testing	Iterate PROF-BOT per user feedback	Launch regional pilot, trial	Launch international pilot, trial

## POTENTIAL PITFALLS

### Public Readiness

People have idealized expectations of virtual educator or question learning from “something” with no track record

**Fail-safe:** *Awareness campaign, optimal mix of fast and slow tech*

### Rushing to Market

Hasty launches to meet predetermined deadlines lead to awkward, error-prone PROF-BOT

**Fail-safe:** *Quality assurance testing*

### Diversity / Localization

For a global rollout, not enough content from international experts to enrich the platform with design perspectives ex-North America

**Fail-safe:** *International recruitment of content experts, participants*

## COMMUNICATING FOR BUY-IN

### Educators

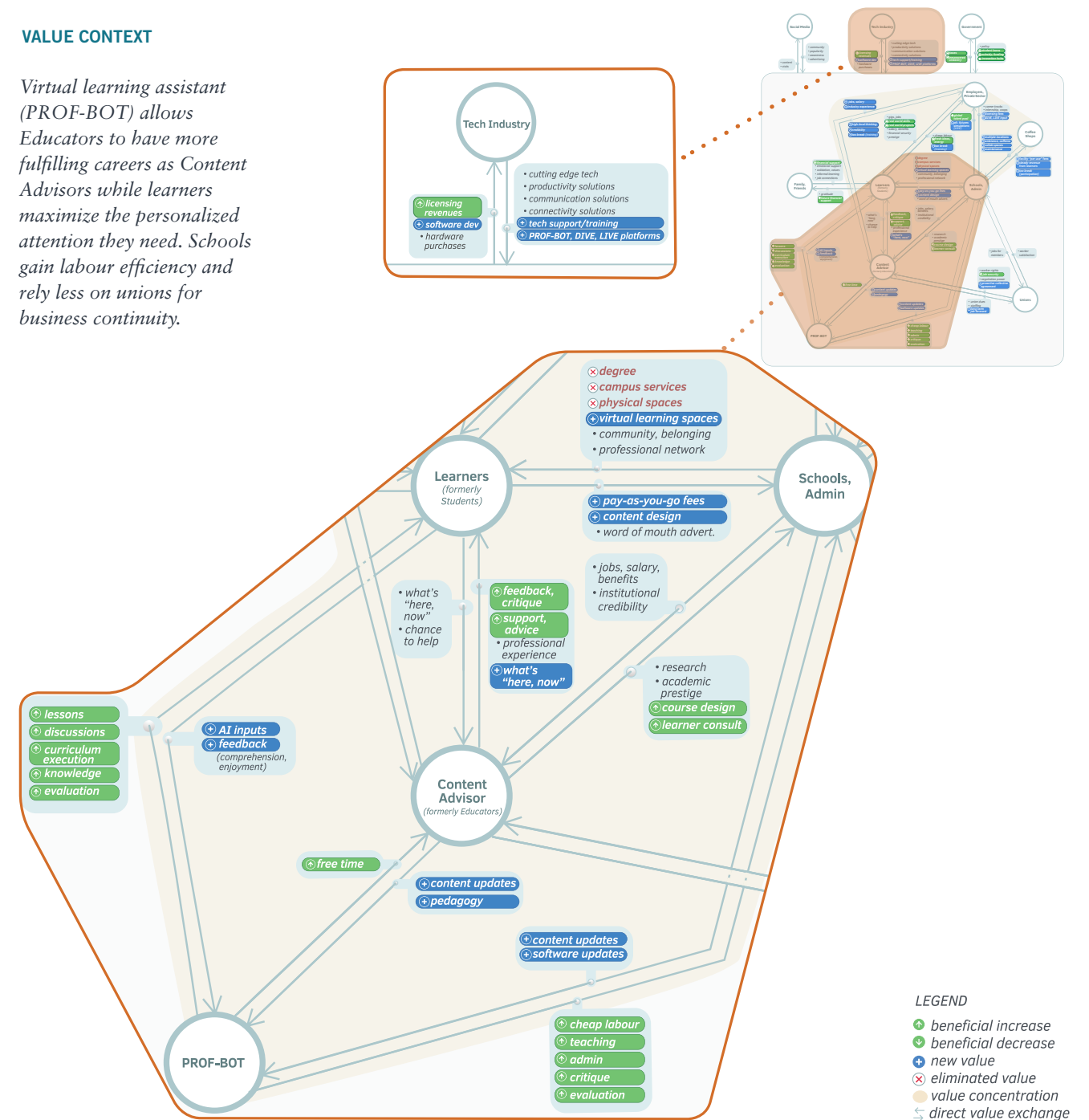
No preparing and delivering tedious lectures, universal access to marking assistant, lower volume of learner inquiries, more flexible work schedules, more time for interesting higher-value work, future-proofing their role

### Tech Industry

Multi-year service agreement, prestige of developing unique platform, corporate social responsibility

## VALUE CONTEXT

*Virtual learning assistant (PROF-BOT) allows Educators to have more fulfilling careers as Content Advisors while learners maximize the personalized attention they need. Schools gain labour efficiency and rely less on unions for business continuity.*



## SCHOOL READINESS METER

Mindset	<div><div></div></div>	Politics	<div><div></div></div>
Money	<div><div></div></div>	Technology	<div><div></div></div>

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

• Comprehension	• Attendance	• Retention
• Learner Engagement with Material	• Admin Turnaround Time	

# REFLECTIONS

While PROF-BOT may not wander the virtual halls of Sheridan College anytime soon, it is incumbent upon design schools and educators to accept (if not welcome) this eventuality.

The promise of technology is well-documented: lecture automation, convenient access, content customization, entertainment, and scalability, to name a few. How, then, can today's educator thrive in this uncomfortable future world? The ironic answer is to dive even more deeply into our comfort zone. While the AI educator delivers hyper-customized lessons and technical skills training, the Content Advisor Formerly Known As Educator doubles down on their intrinsic value proposition and offers wisdom, guidance, empathy, and sober second thought to the design learner of tomorrow. Indeed, if we accept the dictionary definition of the word "luxury" as "something that gives you pleasure or an advantage which you do not usually have," might human contact

be the new luxury in our technologically driven culture?

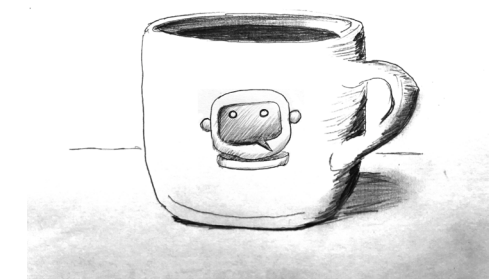
One of the unspoken goals of this MRP has always been to provoke thought, open discussions, and, better still, ignite stakeholder action well before the likes of PROF-BOT are amongst us. Schools can rethink physical campuses by partnering with the private sector for more conducive environments. Online learning approaches can be pushed beyond glorified web portals by collaborating with the tech industry on AI-assisted learning. Educators, in concert with their labour associations, can proactively evolve from lecturer to advisor in preparation for a "teacherless" society. As A Bot of Coffee shows, maximizing value creation in the web of post-secondary design learning allows us to face the future without fear.

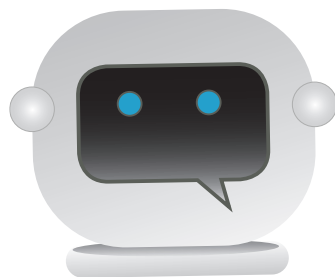
As a program coordinator at Sheridan College, what can I commit to today? I intend to prototype the enhanced advisory role inspired by A Bot of Coffee. This starts with maximizing in-person studio

time by shifting supplemental learning to online delivery methods. To enrich the learning culture, I will look to the human-centred motivations identified herein to foster a responsive environment that recognizes individual learning styles and encourages experimentation. To instill an addiction to learning, I will infuse a meaningful, scaffolded approach to curriculum design where methods and achievements are clear and content in one course purposefully informs another. Finally, I will recalibrate the "Web Design" program to showcase employable Sheridan talent who can design compelling, human-centred digital products for any platform.

It is important to recognize that A Bot of Coffee is but one depiction of the future at a fixed point in time. As such, my work cannot end here. I will continue to seek and workshop other viable futures so that tomorrow's design learning environment not only stays relevant but also one day predicts the needs of industry and learners alike. It takes

a community to shape the future(s) of design learning. I invite others to advance this research approach of thoughtfully framing and evaluating the state of design education, creatively ideating and refining future "worlds" of learning, and most importantly, resourcefully finding ways of activating them. For those who need further convincing, I leave you with this: While large-scale technological disruption may still be unprecedented in an academic context, it is most certainly foreseeable.





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## APPENDIX A: SORTING UTTERANCES—LEGEND

Ac	Ackoff, R. (2008). Turning Learning Right Side Up: Putting Education Back on Track.
Ad	Expert Interview 1. Personal communication, August 3, 2017.
Bg	Baggaley, J. (2014). Online Learning: a New Testament. <i>Distance Education</i> , 35, 1, 133-140.
Ch	Expert Interview 3. Personal communication, August 5, 2017.
Ely	Ely, D. (1999). Toward a philosophy of instructional technology: Thirty years on. <i>British Journal of Educational Technology</i> , 30(4), 305–310.
Fa	Farkas, M. (2012). Participatory technologies, pedagogy 2.0 and information literacy. <i>Library Hi Tech</i> , 30(1), 82-94.
Fi	Fischer, G. (2014). Beyond hype and underestimation: identifying research challenges for the future of MOOCs. <i>Distance Education</i> , 35, 2, 1–10.
i	Illich, I. (1971). Deschooling society. [1st ed.] New York: Harper & Row.
k	Kemp, A. T., Preston, J., Page, C. S., Harper, R., Dillard, B., Flynn, J., & Yamaguchi, M. (2014). Technology and teaching: A conversation among faculty regarding the pros and cons of technology. <i>The Qualitative Report</i> , 19(3), 1-23.
kh	Khan, R., Kellner, D. (2007). Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich: technology, politics and the reconstruction of education. <i>Policy Futures in Education</i> , 5(4), 431-448.
La	LaMonica, M. (2006). “Futurist: to fix education, think Web 2.0”, <i>CNET</i>
Lv	Expert Interview 4. Personal communication, August 5, 2017
Ma	Expert Interview 3. Personal communication, August 4, 2017
Mc	McGowan, H., Araya, D. (2016). - Education and accelerated change: The imperative for design learning. <i>Brown Centre Chalkboard</i> .
Sh	Shirvani, H. (2015). Liberal learning: A suitable education for the free individual. <i>The Hechinger Report</i> .
Sw	Swearer, R. <i>Reshaping Education for the Future of Work at MaRS Discovery District</i> (keynote lecture, May 30, 2017).
Tr	Terras, M., Ramsay, J. (2015). Massive open online courses (MOOCs): Insights and challenges from a psychological perspective. <i>British Journal of Educational Technology</i> , 46(3), 472-487.
w	Watson, D.M. (2001). Pedagogy before Technology: Re-thinking the Relationship between ICT and Teaching. <i>Education and Information Technologies</i> . 6: 251.

Legend for Sorting Utterances Appendix B to G

## APPENDIX A: SORTING UTTERANCES–SOCIAL



## APPENDIX A: SORTING UTTERANCES–TECHNOLOGICAL



## APPENDIX A: SORTING UTTERANCES- ECONOMIC



## APPENDIX A: SORTING UTTERANCES- ENVIRONMENTAL





## APPENDIX A: SORTING UTTERANCES- POLITICAL



## APPENDIX A: SORTING UTTERANCES- VALUES







INTERVIEW DISCUSSION GUIDES: EDUCATORS

June 5, 2017 - Professor (Code: Ch)

Technology plays a big role in teaching. What do you consider technology?  
*Follow up depending on the answer (day-to-day life or in education)*

How has College bureaucracy been a barrier to something that you tried to implement in the program or curriculum?  
What are the tensions?

Is there an example where they supported you?

Do you consider the College a big business?  
Acting too much like one or not enough?

Can you recall an inspiring figure or teacher that made a lasting impact?  
Please describe an example

What if one of the Web Design non-studio courses was taught online? Which one would you pick — and why?

If you could turn back time, what is the one thing you would change in your role as an educator (or program coordinator)?

August 4, 2017 - Professor (Code: Ma)

Technology plays a big role in teaching. What do you consider technology?  
*Follow up depending on the answer (day-to-day life or in education)*

Students come in with varying levels of technical proficiency, especially in first year. How do you manage this?

What do you think are the biggest challenges that students face based on your experiences with them?

Can you speak to an example of successful collaboration in the classroom?  
Any examples where collaboration led to sub-optimal results and why?

What if one of your studio courses was taught online, any comments?

If you could create the ideal teaching environment, what would that be like for you?  
Please describe an example

INTERVIEW DISCUSSION GUIDES: EDUCATORS

June 27, 2018 - Professor, University of British Columbia (Code: Cu)

How do you anticipate the role of design educators evolving in the decade?

How does technology facilitate collaboration among students and educators?

With post-secondary students having self-directed and autonomous learning options, where do you see the educator role fitting in?

What are your thoughts on online course delivery?  
*Probe: Human nuance, blended approaches*

Describe what lifelong learning means to you, outside of a structured, post-secondary environment?

June 29, 2018 - Professor, Illinois Institute of Technology (Code: Ba)

How do you see the student experience changing in the future?

How do you anticipate the role of design educators evolving in the decade?

What are your thoughts on online course delivery?  
*Probe: Human nuance, blended approaches*

What are your thoughts on design schools partnering with industry and having them more involved in curriculum?

Describe what lifelong learning means to you, outside of a structured, post-secondary environment?

July 3, 2018 - Digital Pedagogy Specialist, McMaster University (Code: Mo)

How do you see the student experience changing in the future?  
*Follow up : Ways students can customize their learning?*

How do you anticipate the role of educators evolving in the next decade?  
*Follow up : Any thoughts on adaptive technologies?*

What are your thoughts on online course delivery?

What are your thoughts on higher education partnering with industry?

As a specialist in digital pedagogy, what does lifelong learning mean to you?  
*Follow up: How might that be nurtured while students are still in school?*

INTERVIEW DISCUSSION GUIDES: STUDENTS

August 3, 2017 - Graduate, Sheridan College Web Design Graduate Certificate Program (Code: Ad)

What counts as technology to you?  
*Follow up depending on the answer (day-to-day life or in education)*

Why did you choose the program(s) that you did? What were you trying to accomplish?

What do you think of the idea that one of your old studio courses would be taught online?  
*Probe: What would work? What wouldn't work for you? Why / not?*

Thinking of your experiences at Sheridan, which aspects do you think prepared you the most for your current job?  
What were you not ready for? *Probes: Technology, life skills, team*

What do you think were the biggest challenges your instructors faced during your time?

What do you think the future holds for the technology in the classroom?

If you could change one and only one thing about your higher-ed experience, what would that be and why?

August 5, 2017 - Graduate Student OCAD University (Code: Lv)

What counts as technology to you?  
*Follow up depending on the answer (day-to-day life or in education)*

What are schools still doing that is way past the best-before date?

Would you describe your undergrad experience as collaborative? Why? Why not?  
*Probe: What role did technology play in that collaboration?*

Do you feel your experience with educators has been a one-way relationship?

Do you feel your education has prepared you for the future?  
*Probe: Role technology could have played in preparing you (helped you / hindered you)?*

If you could change one and only one thing about your higher-ed experience, what would that be and why?

INTERVIEW DISCUSSION GUIDES: STUDENTS

July 3, 2018 - Adjunct Professor, Graduate Student OCAD University (Code: Kp)

How do you see the student experience changing in the future?  
*Follow up : Ways students can customize their learning?*

How do you anticipate the role of educators evolving in the next decade?  
*Follow up : Any thoughts on adaptive technologies?*

What are your thoughts on online course delivery?

What are your thoughts on higher education partnering with industry?

What does lifelong learning mean to you?  
*Follow up: How might that be nurtured while students are still in school?*

**2017 Learning Technologies Symposium**  
*October 11–12, 2017*  
*Mills Library L504, McMaster University, 1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON*

The Learning Technologies Symposium (LTS) is an annual event that brings together faculty, staff, and students from the region to share innovations, connect on project ideas, and exchange best practices.

**Reshaping Education for the Future of Work**  
*May 30, 2017*  
*MaRS Centre (Auditorium), 101 College Street, Toronto, ON*

A presentation by Randy Swearer, VP of education at Autodesk, about the importance of developing new ways of learning—both inside and outside of traditional educational institutions—that help graduates adapt to changing professions and new skills requirements.

**SXD: Kickstart**  
*March 13, 2017*  
*MaRS Discovery District, 101 College Street, Toronto, ON*

eCampusOntario showcases projects from Student-Experience Design Studio, where 25 students from across the province came together to look at the present and future of online and technology-enabled learning in Ontario.

**RSD5 2016: Relating Systems Thinking and Design (RSD5) 2016 Symposium**  
*October 13–15, 2016*  
*MaRS Discovery District, 101 College Street, Toronto, ON*

The symposium series has the intention to promote and foster the emerging dialogue of rethinking systems approaches in design.

ARTIFACTS

These handouts were distributed to participants so they can reference notes on the workshop’s topic and the four layers of the Causal Layered Analysis method that structured the session.

# Required workplace skills change faster than curricula, no longer guarantee relevant jobs

**REQUIRED SKILLS CHANGE**

- Design education: deep specialty for specific problems
- Workplaces deal with wicked problems, require new skills
- Designers don't just 'do' anymore

**FASTER THAN CURRICULA**

- Educators scramble to update course, lengthy bureaucracy creating new courses
- Necessitate perpetual teacher training
- Or radical reform of educational systems

**FOR RELEVANT JOBS**

- Students graduate partially obsolete
- By 2025, one-third of all jobs will be automated
- 65% grade schoolers will have jobs not yet invented
- By 2027, 75% of S&P 500 index will list companies not yet created

## CLA METHOD

**PROBLEM**

**CAUSES**

**WORLDVIEW**

**METAPHORS**

**OBSERVATIONS [WHAT IS HAPPENING]**  
events, trends, media spin, diagnosed problems

**CONNECTIONS [WHAT, WHO CAUSED THIS]**  
interconnections of social, tech, economic, policy, historical factors

**DISCUSSION / DEBATE [WHAT'S VALUED BY THOSE INVOLVED]**  
dominant or marginalized opinions & viewpoints

**DEPICTION [WHAT'S THE DEEPER STORY]**  
gut level or emotional responses, narrative, visual image

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APPENDICES 107

CAUSAL LAYERED ANALYSIS WORKSHOP DETAILS

- Workshop A (Recent Graduates): June 26, 2018 at OCAD University, 205 Richmond St. West, Toronto ON
- Workshop B (Design Educators): July 11, 2018 at OCAD University, 205 Richmond St. West, Toronto ON

PARTICIPANT CRITERIA

- Workshop A: Currently working as a designer and, in the last three years, has graduated from a post-secondary, technology-enabled design program
- Workshop B: Professor of a post-secondary, technology-enabled interaction design program
- Able to attend a two-hour in-person session in the Toronto area

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

Recent Graduates

- AD: Digital Designer, graduate of Web Design Graduate Certificate Program, Sheridan College
- DS: Senior Service Designer, graduate of York / Sheridan Program in Design
- EK: UX Designer, graduate of York / Sheridan Program in Design
- MA: Senior Service Designer, graduate of Strategic Foresight & Innovation, OCAD University
- MK: Graphic Designer, graduate of York / Sheridan Program in Design
- NH: Design Professional, graduate of Strategic Foresight & Innovation, OCAD University

Design Educators

- DW: Professor, Interaction Design, Sheridan College
- IZ: Professor, Visual Creative Arts, Sheridan College
- MG: Adjunct Professor, York / Sheridan Program in Design
- RA: Professor, York / Sheridan Program in Design

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Moderator’s guide offered the participant context and prompts to help generate a future scenario.

CONSIDERATIONS

- reimagine ‘traditional’ post-secondary design education 10-15 years in the future
- the learning experience is tech-enabled and learner-centric (not reliant on educators)  
  consider where tech will be a decade from now and how that may change how we learn
- one card can “lead” the scenario, but please consider aspects from each card

WORKSHEET

What would be most different about this design learning future?

How and where does learning take place?

What does collaboration look like in this design learning scenario?

How is technology utilized to optimize the learning experience?



DISCUSSION GUIDE (CONT.)

Briefly describe the administration of this design learning future

What would be the biggest obstacle?

What would you call this program?

MORPHOLOGICAL SYNTHESIS WORKSHOPS (ONE-ON-ONE)

- Workshop A (Recent Graduates): September 28, 2018 at OCAD University, 205 Richmond St. West, Toronto ON
- Workshop B (Design Educators): December 6, 2018 at OCAD University, 205 Richmond St. West, Toronto ON

PARTICIPANT CRITERIA

- Workshop A: Currently working as a designer and, in the last three years, has graduated from a post-secondary, technology-enabled design program
- Workshop B: Professor of a post-secondary, technology-enabled interaction design program

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

Recent Graduates

- CV: Designer, graduate of Strategic Foresight & Innovation, OCAD University
- JT: Senior Project Designer, graduate of Strategic Foresight & Innovation, OCAD University


Design Educators

- JA: Adjunct Professor, Interaction Design, Sheridan College
- RA: Professor, York / Sheridan Program in Design

HUMAN-CENTRED STEEPV CARDS

Participants were given 20 cards face down and asked to randomly pick one card for each of six back side colours (i.e. the lead motivation for a specific factor) to end up with six cards in total.


SO-1



**ACTIVE LEARNING**

The pursuit of highly personal learning outcomes through individual drive and co-creation of knowledge.


SO-2



**EMPLOYABILITY**

A program that is highly respected and valued by employers, students, and the public.


SO-3



**COMMUNITY BUILDING**

An inclusive, well-organized circle that creates emotionally satisfying relationships.


TE-1



**CUSTOMIZED LEARNING**

Efficient tools that let students create and pursue learning pathways as unique as they are


TE-2



**OPTIMAL USE**

A culture of learning that embraces iteration and experimentation in the use of technology


TE-3



**PEOPLE FIRST**

A program that puts technology in the service of students and teachers, not the other way around


TE-4



**CODE OF CONDUCT**

Clear policies on the acceptable use of technology in interactions with people and intellectual property

EC-1



**VIABILITY**

A financially efficient business model that does not sacrifice student and faculty engagement

EC-2



**CURRENCY**

Skills and experiences that are in tune with personal goals and ahead of industry demands

EC-3



**ACCESSIBILITY**

Equal opportunity to have and to use technology to fuel one's personal learning mission

EN-1



**ADAPTIVE SPACES**

Fluid environments that mold physically, procedurally, and technologically to student feedback and the outside world

EN-2



**NO BOUNDS**

An eye-opening learning landscape that is not walled in by time, space, or orthodoxy

EN-3



**CONDUCTIVE SPACES**

Student-defined learning environments supported by expert guidance and venues to implement ideas

PO-1



**CLEAR LEADERSHIP & POLICY**

Holistic and widely understood direction built on institutional diversity and student success

PO-2



**TWO-WAY STREET**

A democratic mindset that encourages dialogue and feedback for positive change

PO-3



**GRASSROOTS**

A willingness to take a bottom-up approach to designing the future of the program

VA-1

**CHOICE**  
The confidence to put students in the driver's seat of their education

VA-2

**FLUIDITY**  
A readiness to embrace the unknown and quickly change course in the name of progress

VA-3

**HUMANISTIC**  
A celebration of each student as a unique, whole being who wants to achieve

VA-4

**LIFELONG MISSION**  
A tireless quest of self-discovery that doesn't stop at graduation

Back side of morphological synthesis cards (one per category shown). Participants select from all twenty cards with the back side up.

SO  
SOCIAL

TE  
TECHNOLOGICAL

EC  
ECONOMIC

EN  
ENVIRONMENTAL

PO  
POLITICAL

VA  
VALUES

