



THE COLLABORATION KIT
A WORKSHOP FOR COLLABORATIVE KNOW-HOW

WORKBOOK

THIS WORKBOOK BELONGS TO:

Brought to you by:



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The Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities and The Regents of the University of Michigan.

WELCOME.

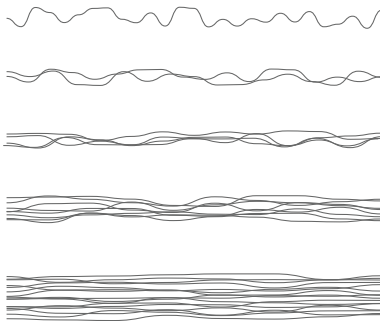
We are delighted you have joined us on a two-day journey to explore the future of cross-disciplinary collaboration in higher education. We have designed this experience to be both an experiential learning practice and a critical exploration of collaboration. We hope you leave the experience with insights into how your colleagues in the field are approaching the most challenging aspects of collaboration, as well as into how you yourself may lead in collaboration for greater impact.

This workshop is based on insights and frameworks from the Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities (a2ru). It was developed from interviews with faculty and upper-level administration at 38 research universities, as well as from other research. We piloted a prototype of this workshop and used that pilot experience—including input from its participants, additional research, and multiple rounds of design—to construct this toolkit. We value your feedback on your experience over the next two days.

Thank you again for joining us and for being an integral part of this work.

Sincerely,
The a2ru Team

CONTEXT: PACE LAYERS



You may be familiar with Stuart Brand's concept of Pace Layers. It's a useful model for how university systems work and why interdisciplinary collaboration can be so hard.

The idea of Pace Layers is that things in the same system move at different rates. Some things move very quickly, some slowly. Information, theories, experiments, instruments, culture, collaborations, practices, artifacts, stories, knowledge, all move and mature at different rates.

Different disciplines run at different paces, too. Theatre or philosophy may work at a different speed of discovery than biomedical research. Our literature, our ways of measuring may follow different tempos. In different fields, knowledge can be built over varying time spans: from 40 days to 4 months, 4 years, or 4 decades.

When you consider yourself as a collaborator:

There's you, there's your team, there's your department, and there's the whole university.

When your collaborator is from a different discipline, now there's them, their team, their department. The complexity multiplies.

It's creative frictions between these layers that makes interdisciplinary collaboration so challenging and exciting. Understanding the Pace Layers in our institutions can provide empathy and understanding for why our expectations differ depending on our vantage point.

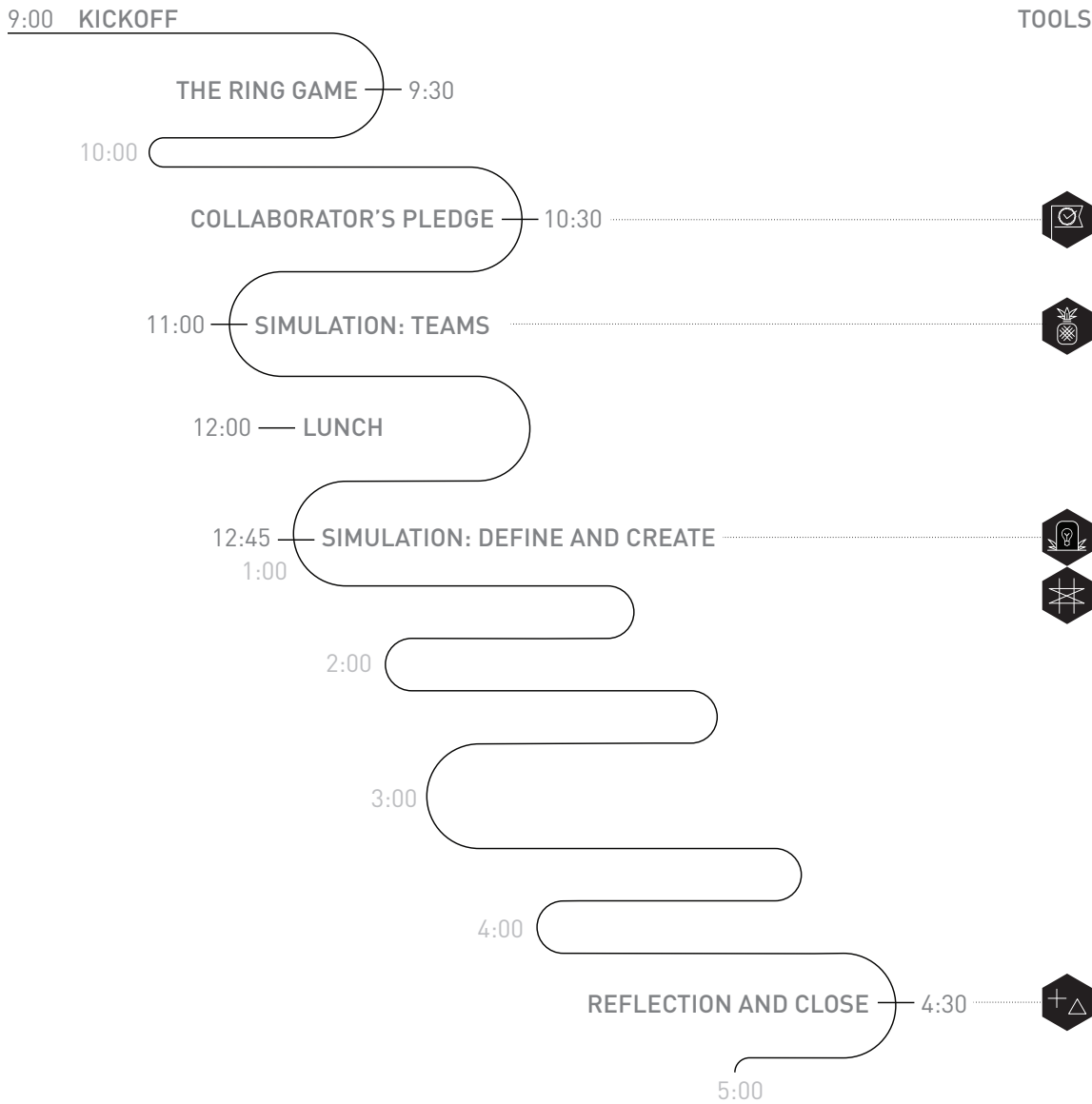
GOALS

- 1 Identify best practices for structuring and leading collaborations
- 2 Explore how we show up as participants in collaborative environments and identify where we each have room for growth
- 3 Learn simple tools we can bring into our everyday interactions

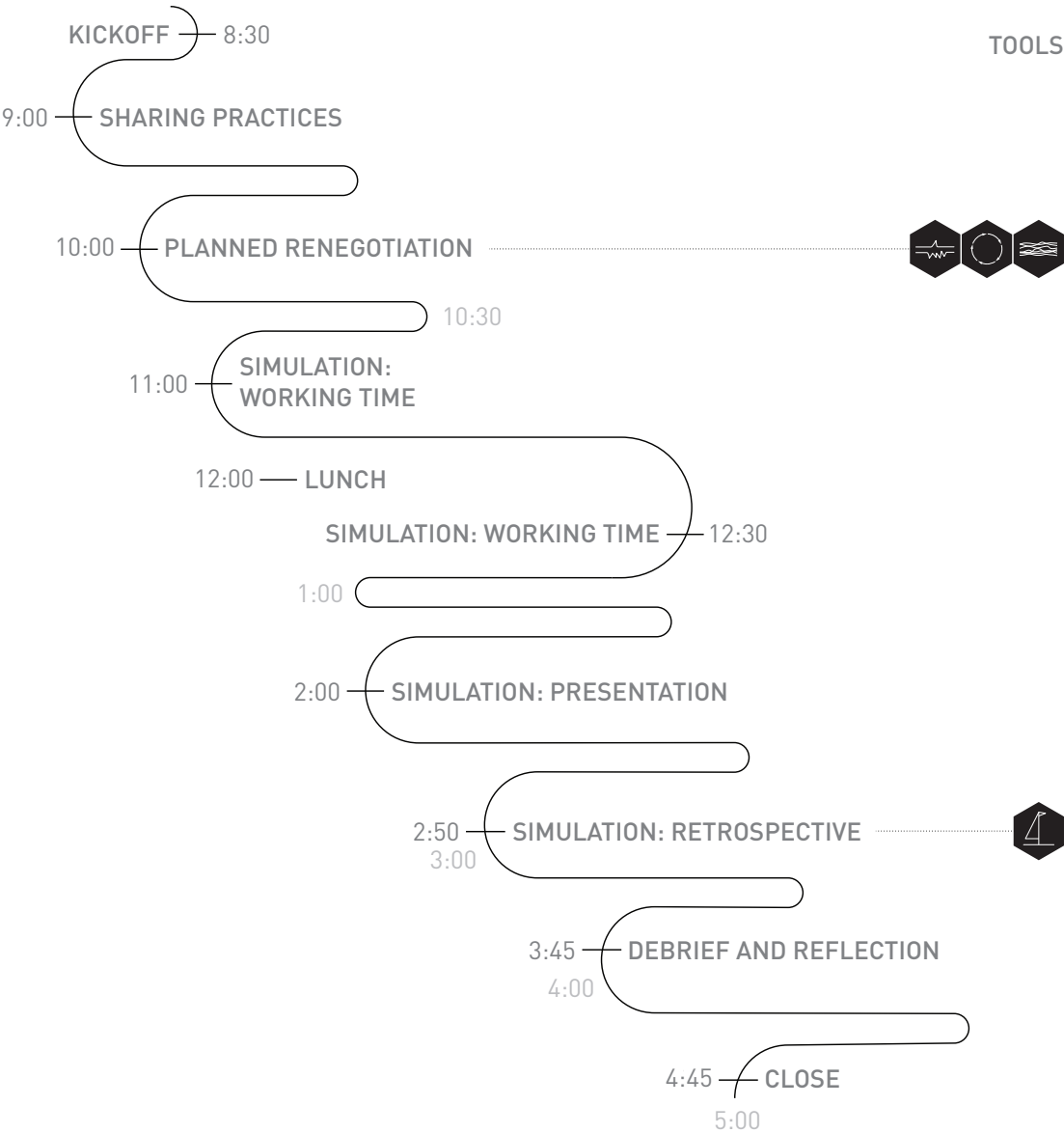


AGENDA

DAY ONE



DAY TWO



THE RING GAME

1. What observations do you have about how the rules of the game informed the experience?
2. What observations do you have about the group process?
What roles emerged?
3. What observations do you have about how you showed up in the group? Where there “tipping points” in the experience where you changed your style? What lead to those moments?

COLLABORATOR'S PLEDGE



I believe collaboration thrives when we don't assume that any single disciplinary approach or worldview is inherently correct, or superior to others.

I invite you to call me out if I am not promoting mutual respect and an open approach.

I PLEDGE TO PRACTICE:

- intellectual generosity, sincerely acknowledging the work of others;
- intellectual confidence, committing to the importance, quality, and fit of my contribution;
- intellectual humility, understanding that my knowledge is always partial and incomplete;
- intellectual flexibility, altering my perspective and conceptual understanding based on insights from other people in order to create common ground, synthesis, and meaning;
- intellectual integrity, the habit of responsible participation that develops trust among collaborators, compelling them to contribute their best work.

I am willing to be in a position of not-knowing, to be educated and to gently educate.

MEET YOUR TEAM

Take a moment to fill out this mad-libs and then share with your team during your introduction. As they share theirs, listen carefully for insights into their expertise and personality, and for clues about how you might best work with them, as they are your primary resources to be successful in your collaboration!

¹Based on the work of Anne Balsamo

Foundational ethical principles of multidisciplinary collaboration. (pg 162). In Chapter Four, Designing Learning: The University as a Site of Technocultural Innovation. Balsamo, A. (2011). Designing culture: The technological imagination at work. Duke University Press.

Hello. My name is _____.

I work at _____ in _____.
(institution/organization) (department/function)

In my field of study, collaborations tend to look like _____.

The collaborations I've been involved in include _____.

The challenges I've encountered most often in collaboration are _____.

I decided to attend this workshop because I'm really hoping to learn more about _____. In particular, I'm hoping to _____.

Most people say I'm great at _____,

but I think my true secret super power is _____.

The one thing you should know about me before we work together is _____.

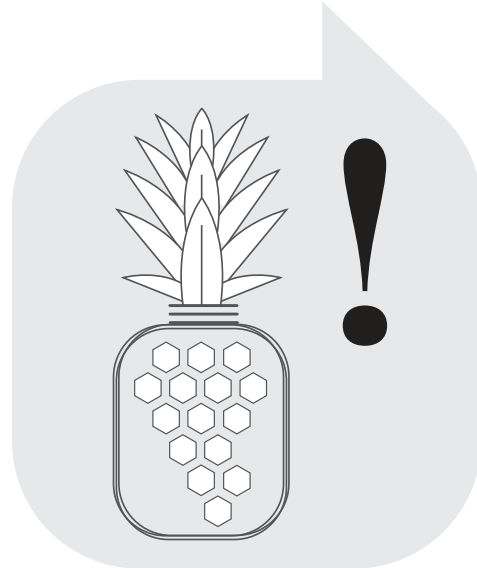


PINEAPPLE

I think we're using
that word differently

What does that
really mean?

I'm lost



WHEN YOU HEAR PINEAPPLE, STOP!

Make your language clear by:

- being open to different interpretations and levels of specificity
- defining terms
- deciding on shared terminology going forward

In long-term interdisciplinary collaborations you might go further to bridge understanding by:

- taking time to specifically discuss underlying meaning and classifications
- making a glossary and explicitly addressing key terms
- witnessing each other's practices—go and observe in a real context
- exchanging materials and information so that a body of shared content knowledge develops

THE BRIEF

OPEN YOUR SIMULATION BRIEF

Each team has been given a unique theme to explore.

RULES

- Teams may only conduct work during designated “rounds” of play
- Each team must present their own complete project, but can collaborate across teams during the design and production experience.
- You may use any of the materials provided on the resource table, any digital resources your team members may have at their disposal, and any resources your team is able to procure during the simulation or the optional evening session.

DESIGN OBJECTIVES AND CONSTRAINTS

You must have a physical artifact or presentation to share with the group at the end of the simulation. The artifact you create must:

- convey the immersive nature of the experience and the key concepts and content explored through the experience.
- not be a lecture or white paper.
- reflect the input and participation of every member of your team.

You will have eight minutes to present your work.



PREMORTEM

It's tomorrow afternoon. Imagine that your project has failed spectacularly. List some of the reasons you can think of for why it didn't work out.



TEAM CHARTER

GOAL

What is your stated objective as a collaboration?

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

How will you work together?

DURATION AND TIME COMMITMENT

Is this a short-duration sprint or
long-term cooperation?

How synchronous or asynchronous?

METHODS

What method(s) will you
use to complete this project?

SCOPE

Define the edges of your collaboration. What is in and what is out?

DECISION MAKING

How will you make decisions as a group?
Are some decisions subject to different criteria?

What decisions can individuals make, and
what decisions must be made by the group?

SUCCESS

What counts as success for this work?

How will you know?

ARTIFACT OR PRODUCT

What kind of artifact(s) or
product(s) will you create as an output?



TEAM CHARTER

CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

- These considerations are likely to affect any collaboration from the outset
- Institutional support for (the) collaboration
- Range of disciplines, departments, people's ranks, values, epistemological differences and institutions involved
- Prior experience working together as team members on projects
- Spatial proximity or distance of offices, studios, laboratories, or workplaces
- Electronic linkages and platforms
- Time allowed
- Specific outline of and support for management, evaluation, and synthesis phases

Key Steps for building awareness and managing key differences:

1. Identify differences
2. Develop a way to discuss those differences
3. Understand and respect the basis for those differences
4. Use that understanding to negotiate solutions for disagreements
5. Allow as much as possible for the satisfaction of all parties

CREATING COMMON GROUND AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

STARTING POINTS

What level of understanding does each collaborator have for others' work and perspectives? Rate your level of understanding on a scale of 1 to 5. What will the group do to actively improve understanding of each other's worlds?

BRIDGING DIFFERENCES

When differences in approach or expectation surface, how will you address them?

How will you determine which differences are relevant to a rich appreciation of the problem and which will just get in the way?

COMPLEX CONCEPTS

Complex concepts are those that lend themselves to different interpretations by different groups. What complex concepts, theories, or assumptions need to be identified and dealt with as the group makes decisions?

SIMULATION NOTES

MILESTONE:

By the end of this round of work you should be well on your way to production and rehearsal.



REFLECTION

1. How are you feeling about the exploration of your theme?
2. How is your team working?
3. What observations do you have about how you personally showed up in the group?
4. What is feeling generative and fun about the experience?
5. What feels unproductive or dreadful about the experience?
6. What about the “how” or “what” of your team’s process might you like to renegotiate?



PLUS



DELTA

DAY 1 NOTES

DAY TWO

SHARING PRACTICES

PLANNED RENEGOTIATION



THE PINCH-CRUNCH MODEL

THE WHEEL OF MINDFULNESS



PLANNED RENEGOTIATION



THE WATERLINE MODEL

Is there anything about our way of working we want to re-negotiate?

REPLY:

TIP:

Record any new group agreements on your team charter poster.

SIMULATION NOTES

MILESTONE:

You must be presentation ready by 2pm.

PRESENTATIONS

TEAM 1:

PRESENTATIONS

TEAM 2:

PRESENTATIONS

TEAM 3:

PRESENTATIONS

TEAM 4:

TEAM RETROSPECTIVE

PRIME DIRECTIVE

“Regardless of what we discover, we understand and truly believe that everyone did the best job they could, given what they knew at the time, their skills and abilities, the resources available, and the situation at hand. At the end of a project everyone knows so much more. Naturally we will discover decisions and actions we wish we could do over. This is wisdom to be celebrated, not judgment used to embarrass.”

Norm Kerth,
Project Retrospectives:
A Handbook for Team Review

2 WORDS

Describe this simulation experience in two words

HINDSIGHT

If we could do this again, what would we do differently?



Presentation

SAILBOAT



SIMULATION DEBRIEF

1. Insights on team process

2. Insights on how I showed up personally

3. What were your top three takeaways?

4. What else do you still want to learn?

DAY 2 NOTES

DAY 2 NOTES

a2ru

The Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities (a2ru) is a partnership and an alliance committed to transforming research universities to ensure the greatest possible institutional support for arts-integrative research, curricula, programs and creative practice between the arts, sciences, and other disciplines. It is committed to supporting the growing body of high-quality scholarly and creative production most attainable when disciplines are free to experiment within and across their boundaries.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation endeavors to strengthen, promote, and, where necessary, defend the contributions of the humanities and the arts to human flourishing and to the wellbeing of diverse and democratic societies. To this end, we support exemplary institutions of higher education and culture as they renew and provide access to an invaluable heritage of ambitious, path-breaking work.

ArtsEngine

ArtsEngine is a strategic collaboration of the College of Engineering, the Stamps School of the Arts and Design, the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, and the School of Music Theatre and Dance, and the School of Information at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. ArtsEngine's mission is to inspire, foster, and strengthen intellectual collisions and durable collaborative practices driven by the arts, design, engineering, and technology to fully maximize the potential of students and faculty.

Future Work Design

Future Work Design acts at the intersection of organizational strategy and design to help organizations work in greater alignment with their mission and values. We believe the future belongs to organizations with the courage to reimagine how they work. We consult directly with clients and design tools that scale to create impact.

