

Fun-ing: applying a playful and embodied pedagogical approach to an online poetry workshop in the Mobile Arts for Peace project

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Abstract

This paper presents how a playful and embodied pedagogical approach (fun-ing) (Huxley, 2023) was applied to an international online poetry workshop for young people, and in doing so, foregrounds *qualities* of learning experiences, rather than neo-liberal skills-based outcomes alone. The methodology of fun-ing is grounded in a reflexive and emplaced ethnographic approach (Pink, 2011), in which the performing body-mind is perceived as encountering its surroundings and the material elements (living/non-living). By applying the Six Guiding principles of fun-ing (Huxley, 2023), to the design and analysis of an online poetry workshop, organised as part of the Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) AHRC-funded project, the paper shows that the principles, originally derived from a doctoral study, can be used in other non-formal learning contexts. A retrospective analysis of the workshop recording (Mosley Wetzel, 2017), via researcher-facilitator critical incidents (Tripp, 1993), shows that the principles support creative educationalists in shaping joyful and novel learning experiences. Ultimately, enabling learners to extend their understanding and felt learning capabilities of what they can do/achieve through the art form of poetry. The paper calls for further contextually specific adaptations of the fun-ing principles by educationalists, artists, and researchers alike.

Keywords: Fun, Arts-based education, Poetry, Online embodiment, Qualities of learning, Mediating artefacts

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Introduction: a call for alternative spaces of learning

Several educational researchers (Biesta, 2009; Passarelli and Kolb, 2012; Brown et al., 2020), advocate that learning and education should align more closely with the development of the ‘whole person’ (Yorks et al., 2006), including the development of social capabilities, and a sense of embodied belonging and personal and social transformation. Advocating for educational practice that moves beyond the often-limited skills-focused agenda, and instead considers alternative processes and qualities of learning. Such a sentiment was also shared at the Gentle Gestures stream on ‘Embodied spaces of collective care, materialism and collaboration,’ at the Midland Conference of Critical Thought (MCCT), in the UK on April 6th, 2024. The Gentle Gestures stream at the conference rested on the claim that ‘there is a gap in methodologies and strategies for activating spaces of alternative forms of learning’ (Gentle Gestures call for contributors, February 2024). This presented itself as an opportune moment to share the piloting, and adaptation of the Six Guiding principles of fun-ing (Huxley, 2023), developed through my doctoral research, and re-applied to the design, delivery, and review of an online poetry workshop as part of the Mobile Arts for Peace (MAP) AHRC-funded project (2020-2024). The Six principles seek to generate joyful and novel ways of learning, and to explore, and dwell in processes/methods of learning, rather than products/outcomes. I’ll outline my doctoral research in the next section, on situating fun-ing, but for now, I present an overview of MAP and the online ARTing workshop on poetry, as well as two guiding questions to explore if and how poetry can be integrated within non formal learning approaches concerned with generating alternative spaces of learning.

MAP is a 4-year international, interdisciplinary applied research project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) in the UK, which began in 2020. MAP demonstrates the value of arts-based methods for everyday peacebuilding with and for young people in post-conflict affected countries (namely, Kyrgyzstan, Rwanda, Indonesia, and Nepal). The research project provides evidence of the gap in how young people can engage decision-makers to affect local and national policy/curricula changes through innovations with living cultural art forms.

As part of this AHRC project, on 9 November 2023, I facilitated a two-hour online ARTing workshop, on Zoom (Archibald et al., 2019), exploring poetry in analysis/dissemination for research. The exploratory workshop aimed at deepening an understanding of how art forms are (re-)created in MAP to generate/shape innovative approaches towards dialogue and impact. The experiential workshop included exploring: What is the form? How can it be adapted/used concerning MAP’s outputs? How is it used for dialogue? The workshop was intended for project team members, specifically young researchers and cultural artists interested in extending their approach to poetry and research i.e., internal MAP project partners. No prior knowledge or experience with poetic inquiry was required. Participants were requested to bring a paragraph of text related to MAP e.g., part of a policy brief from phase 1, or an anonymised interview transcript, as well as a pen and paper, and a curious mind.

This paper focuses on responding to two main questions: firstly, can the Six principles be applied to a different learning context? Secondly, if yes, how does a playful and embodied educational approach (fun-ing) foreground qualities of learning experience during a specific online poetry workshop? I use a retrospective analysis of critical incidents, grounded in a micro ethnographic research design, to demonstrate the possibilities of the principles of fun-ing, as well as the challenges/opportunities of using them in a different learning context. Finally, I advocate for further contextually specific adaptations of the fun-ing principles by educationalists and artists to understand the efficacy of the principles, especially in arts-based education contexts.

A micro ethnographic study: positionality, the participant group, and methods

In learning experiences, the singular and short can be equally as meaningful as a collective long-term experience. Most people can recall a lesson/learning experience that impacted their life. Whilst definitions of ethnography are normally grounded in long-term participant observation (Atkinson, 2007, Hammersley et al., 2019), in this paper I want to signal the importance of bringing an attentiveness to a singular 2-hour workshop – a micro ethnographic study. While there are limitations, which will be discussed in the conclusion, from a *practical educational perspective*, such a focus on the design and unfolding of one workshop has merit. The noticing of particular fun-ing pedagogical aspects, within a broader emplaced ethnographic approach (Pink, 2012), provides a framework and reflection useful for the applied/practical intentions behind this micro study: that educators and artists can take the learnings further – questioning, adapting, and sharing.

As an ethnographer, that is a researcher concerned with the attentiveness to a specific group of people's socio-cultural relations/behaviour (Hammersley et al., 2019), it is always important to outline positionality (Atkinson, 2007). This provides a reader with the contextual lenses through which interpretations are made. Firstly, I brought to this workshop my previous experiences of facilitating non-formal workshops, from my earlier career as a youth specialist in international development projects. This meant I was familiar with learner-centred approaches such as integrating 'energiser games,' partner work, and using flip chart/art-informed methods, such as body mapping and problem tree analysis. During my doctoral research, I extensively considered and researched materiality (Woodward, 2015) and mediating artefacts (Engeström, 1987) in physical and online contexts, respectively. This continues to inform my socio-cultural and learner-centred pedagogical practice. I also became fascinated using poetry as a method of knowledge production: one that provides embodied, affective, and often more than verbal communication (Huxley, 2021). Finally, as a Post Doc on MAP, I continued developing my knowledge and understanding of participatory arts-based approaches in global development (Ware et al., 2024) with young people. These three identity markers all inform how I approached the poetry workshop design.

Attending the online workshop were a diverse group of fifteen participants from the MAP project, ranging in ages from their late teens to mid-life. Participants came from Rwanda, Indonesia, Nepal, and the UK, and had an intermediate level of English. They were a mix of youth researchers, cultural artists, civil society partners, and academics. I had encountered/worked with most of them across a period of 10 months prior, but not concerning poetic inquiry. Most of the participants were young people. There were two participants with limited English language skills, and they partnered/buddied with a friend whose English was proficient. Most participants had limited knowledge/experience of working with poetry in a research context. It was aimed as an introductory session. Participants contributed to the experience and generation of poems, as well as reflections, collectively, on the learning experience, but not towards the research design, or analysis.

The overall approach to this micro study was deductive. I used the knowledge and fun-ing framework generated from a 3-year doctoral study to guide this micro-study, using, and building upon the literature and concepts. As an educationalist/facilitator myself, I designed a lesson plan to incorporate the fun-ing principles: this was a key part of my research method, and I will return to this after the literature review. The online synchronous workshop was recorded via Zoom, and a transcript was generated to serve as a secondary source for the retrospective video analysis of my own critical incidents.

Let us now turn to explaining the notion of fun-ing and where it originates from, before discussing relevant literature, including the value of 'fun' and 'embodied' experiences in learning.

Understanding the context: situating fun-ing

The concept of fun-ing comes from my doctoral research entitled "The relationship between fun and learning: an online embodied ethnography of Coaches Across Continents" (2023). My doctoral work offered a transdisciplinary, socio-cultural-material ethnography, of fun and learning, which took place within an educational charity, Coaches Across Continents (CAC), that uses the concept of 'Purposeful Play.' It considers how CAC pivoted, during the COVID-19 pandemic, towards synchronous online learning experiences. The ethnography explores how fun is socially constructed; how it relates to online learning; and whether fun is a meaningful concept within CAC and beyond.

What is fun-ing? I frame 'fun' as an embodied socio-cultural phenomenon, which is an experience of body-mind-material states and the expressive interpretation of these mediating states (within specific space-times) (Huxley, 2023). In this regard, fun is 'relative, situational, voluntary and natural' (Bisson and Luckner, 1996: 6). Being attentive and becoming in a state of fun-ing (fun-embodied-learning) in a sensorial/body-conscious learning environment is an active provocation to consider and act upon alterities, to the already familiar. This is meaningful in a learning context because it reminds the learner and the educator/coach that there is always a novel way to sense, think, do, be, and learn itself. There is an option, a possibility, a worthwhile consideration of what to value within learning and education. Learning with the intentionality of embodiment and fun-ing brings an attentiveness to the qualities of inhabiting and dwelling in a space, with other peoples' body-minds, and mediating/physical artefacts, across several spacetimes (online and offline, imagined, and physical) (see part of the Bracketing model in Figure 1). Such an attentiveness to qualities of the state (being and becoming), of the learning context itself, generates and invites a different value system, one not solely focused on skill development and outcomes.

In my doctoral research, I developed the concept of fun-ing in the context of an alternative educational charity that used physical play and football-focused games as an approach towards community-based social

action, Coaches Across Continents. The purpose of this paper is not to go into depth about the doctoral study, however, the thesis does explore the concepts/evidence, I briefly touch upon here, in more detail.

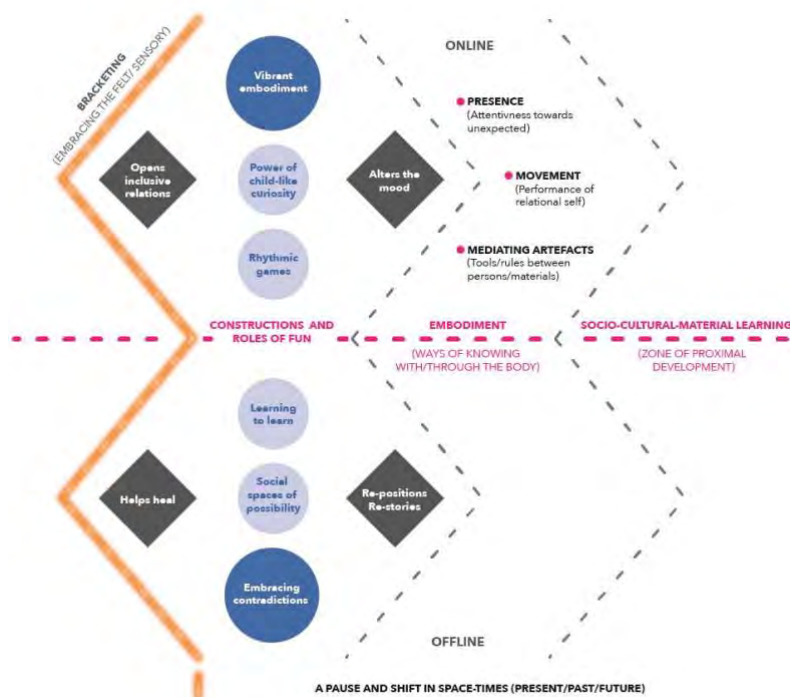


Figure 1: Embodiment as outlined in the Bracketing model – becoming in a state of fun-ing (Huxley, 2023)

In summary, my intention with the poetry ARTing workshop for MAP, was to investigate if the pedagogical principles created in one context could still be relevant, and provide beneficial qualities of learning experiences, in a different arts-based research context. Both settings were online, using Zoom, and in multi-cultural, inter-generational spaces. The ARTing workshop allowed for a further exploration and understanding of the principles themselves. Within my overarching research questions of if/how can fun-ing foreground qualities of learning experience during a poetry workshop, I would also reflect upon: whether the principles were all equally relevant? Did I have a propensity towards one over others? Did that matter? The principles are therefore offered as resources for educators/artists/researchers/youth workers to draw from, if concerned with creative pedagogies that challenge mainstream instructivist and production-orientated pedagogies.

The theoretical scaffolding: building a pedagogy and way of being through fun-ing

Let us now consider sociological and physical educational perspectives that support the conceptualisation of fun-ing. From a sociological perspective, Fincham (2016) researched 'fun' within UK society, drawing from 1950s literature on 'fun morality', as well as research with undergraduates at university, examining the value of how fun provides social functions in different social contexts, namely work, family, education, and leisure. Fincham's (2016) work outlines the relationships of fun as something experienced that is concerned with interaction, identity representation, power, and transgression. He argues that whilst it is multidimensional and multifunctional, it is inherently related to identity and social wellbeing – a phenomenon that 'enhances life' (p.5). Fincham (2016) speaks of the 'nowness of fun...[and] temporality' (p.158) as part of the sensory subjective experiencing of fun. This is recognised as a social construct – coloured by class, gender and so on - and represented affectively. Therefore, the embodied and sensory manifestations are understood to be socially embedded. Furthermore, 'there is no space for reflexivity about fun during fun, that's just not how we experience it or how it works (p. 158). For Fincham (2016) the 'significance often becomes apparent in retrospect' (p.156), and an understanding of fun and how it feels is as much a problem with the limitations of language as it is with assumptions about 'how we experience the world in relation to moments' (p.181). This invites a consideration of the nature of fun concerning

both planned moments, reflexivity, as well as spontaneous unfoldings, and this is corroborated by physical educational researchers, Bisson and Luckner (1996) who reflect that fun is ‘relative, situational, voluntary and natural’ (Bisson and Luckner, 1996: 6).

I understand fun to be an integral part of our relational experience to deeply connect and notice our aliveness with otherness: otherness being the body-minds, materials, and wider contexts that an individual (person/self) inhabits. This happens through an acute sensory awareness with and through our own bodies. In this way fun-ing (a gerund that moves between present participle and noun), a state of relational being in motion, is a more accurate term because it can be experienced, generated, and passed on with other body-minds, sometimes spontaneously (Huxley, 2023). Whilst there is significant literature on play and learning, fun as a pedagogical possibility is severely undervalued and under-researched.

Whilst there is current research, particularly from gaming and/or learning sciences, which considers the nature/functions of fun in learning contexts, they do not consider fun in relation to qualities of learning experiences, nor arts-based/poetic inquiry. The work by Tisza et al. (2023) focuses on the FunQ, a psychometric instrument for assessing fun consisting of six dimensions (*Autonomy, Challenge, Delight, Immersion, Loss of Social Barriers, and Stress*). Fun here is instrumentalised – what's important is what it does. Similarly, the work of Malone et al., (2021) focuses on a taxonomy of intrinsic motivations for learning, and whilst their work references fun, it doesn't substantially grapple with what fun is in and of itself, rather ‘fun’ is used to encapsulate ways to motivate and engage learners (specifically in gaming contexts). Neither of these approaches are concerned with socio-cultural-material perspectives on learning.

Two main theoretical influences contributed towards the development of the Six principles (and the excerpt of the Bracketing model in Figure 1), socio-cultural-material perspectives on learning and ‘online embodiment.’ Socio-cultural-material perspectives on learning assume that processes of thinking, sensing, and learning are not contained within individual minds, but rather are distributed and negotiated across persons, tools (artefacts), and learning environments. This perspective, historically inspired by the work of Lev Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1934/1978) continues to inspire many others (e.g., Passarelli and Kolb, 2011), and can be described as ‘mediational’ approaches to learning, because the common focus of these approaches is on the tools/artefacts (e.g., language, material tools, other persons) used in the process of learning (Leander et al., 2010). This is particularly relevant for knowledge production through practices of *making* (art), that is meaning making through the dialogic and relational praxis with material, form, body, and performance.

Here it is useful to note the value of ‘embodied’ experiences in learning, and many educational and dance/performance scholars have evidenced that human communication is much more than simply verbal, and specifically that language alone is insufficient and inexact; and that communication and human understanding are deeply metaphorical (Leigh and Brown, 2021). Lawrence (2012), a dance researcher advocates that the most primal way of accessing knowledge is through the body, as our earliest forms of knowing are preverbal...knowledge is present in the body before it reaches our conscious awareness... [there is] hidden knowledge’ (Lawrence, 2012: 7). This means that making meaning (knowledge) of the world around cannot simply ‘just be told or read about; it must be experienced’ (Snowber, 2012: 55).

My understanding of online embodiment specifically draws from literature that focuses on aspects of ‘presence’ (Coonfield and Rose, 2012), ‘movement’ as a performance of self and non-judgemental noticing in a given environment (Ucok-Sayrak and Brazelton, 2021) and ‘mediating artefacts’ (Engeström, 1987). Mediating artefacts are understood as tools, rules, procedures, and practices that are used as a way of negotiating a representation/identity. I view ‘presence’ as the embodied sensation of a hyper being/consciousness of the present now, or ‘being-here-now’ (Coonfield and Rose, 2012); an attentiveness to the spontaneous, unexpected aspects of experience (Coonfield and Rose, 2012). This situates ‘presence’ as an alignment of self, text, image, and audience. It is therefore understood as a sensitivity, a sensory attunement to being alive, in the specificity of any given moment, whereby a person’s relational body-mind is highly alert and open to connecting with other learners.

Applying fun-ing with and through poetic inquiry (found poetry)

Fun-ing is an emergent pedagogy that can be interwoven with the multi-expressive artistic research methodology of poetic inquiry, and specifically ‘found poetry’ (Leavy, 2009). Originally found poetry was used as an individual form of analysis and dissemination in my doctoral thesis. Whereas in the context of the online poetry workshop, the process and art of making poetry, collectively, with and between facilitator/researcher/poet and learner/poet,

facilitated a way of noticing and generating knowledge as the learning experience itself, as an unfolding, experiential occurrence.

Poetry can add a deeper/more affective layer to how we communicate as researchers, facilitators/teachers, and artists. Poetic inquiry (Penwarden and Schoone, 2021) explores and generates ways of noticing that are grounded in perceiving the world 'as living event', rather than as preservable objects and subjects. 'Found poetry' (Leavy, 2009) uses existing text/extracts from research, such as interview transcripts, and crafts new texts often in participatory ways, and often using metaphor, to emote and communicate the sensory/more than verbal. Or as embodied theorist Ellingson, celebrates, 'poetic writing is inherently sensual, playful, and immersed in the specific moments of specific lives; the genre itself is a refusal of objectivity' (Ellingson, 2017: 185). There is a layering of voices, and a celebration of plurality and multiplicity in found poetry, which plays with temporalities and identities, and this is also a shared attribute of fun-ing.

The Six Principles: inviting an embodied and experiential value system

As part of the MAP project in 2023, we decided to initiate a series of online ARTing workshops. The intention was to consider a specific art form (as research practice), and to unpack how it can be used in research practices, as well as to consider how it may contribute towards the project's goal of developing a two-way form of communication between young people and policymakers. I initiated the first, taking the opportunity to apply fun-ing as a pedagogical resource, considering how the creating, crafting, and speaking aloud of found poetry, may invite in, and extend this embodied and experiential learning opportunity.

I now turn to explain the Six Principles I used to help design the poetry ARTing workshop. The Six Principles challenge neo-liberal thinking on learning, by focusing on joyful and novel ways to: inhabit spaces; relate to each other; pace activities; consider non-verbal ways of communicating; recognise online-offline capabilities; and measure learning focused on feelings and affect. In my doctoral work I called these the 'Six principles of fun embodied learning.' The principles are not mutually exclusive. The intention is that they are used and developed (in their own contexts) by coaches/educators/practitioners/artists. I summarise the Six Principles below and point to key literature that informed each.

1) Inhabit the learning space

Bring an attentiveness to the 'now' (Fincham, 2016) of the learning experience – noticing (with an attentiveness) the qualities your range of senses invites to your learning contexts. Acknowledge the presence of your body-mind and that of others: play brings us into the most immediate moment. Informative literature on this principle included work on the concept of 'presence' by Coonfield et al., (2012) towards the unexpected, and Ucock-Sayrak et al., (2021) on non-judgemental noticing.

2) Consider novel ways of relating to each other

Invite a fun embodied type of learning, which is an explicit engagement with playful undoing, and considering other pedagogic ways of relating, either interspersed as moments within learning, or if the intention of the learning is informality, then as a whole experience. This means seeking out unfamiliar ways of relating to each other. This can employ more horizontal ways of teaching and learning, but it also can be a commitment to pedagogy that emphasises process, alongside or even over outcomes. Informative literature on this principle included the work of Yorks et al., (2006) on embodied and transformative learning as something that occurs within a person's body and mind, *and* between persons.

3) Craft the tempo of a learning experience (allowing for spontaneity)

The subjectivity of how fun is experienced requires that a learning experience needs to be a form of 'disciplined improvisation' (Sawyer, 2004), that structure and spontaneity, are both crucial for a creative pedagogic practice. In that each session is crafted to offer up a change in the pace and type of activities/learning games included, but also the type of fun. This approach to 'changing it up' seeks to keep the learning experience inclusive as all learners, as distinct types of fun appeal more than others to individuals. The group may eventually construct certain games/types of fun as a group. This principle acknowledges the six main types of fun identified from my doctoral research: vibrant embodiment, power of child-like curiosity, rhythmic games, learning to learn, social spaces of possibility and embracing contradictions.

4) Embrace verbal and non-verbal ways of communicating

Verbal and non-verbal ways of communicating are important for an embodied understanding of fun, and its contributions to learning experiences. A core aspect of this is taking on an attitude of playfulness, as ‘a shaking off of constraints’ (Gordon and Esbjorn-Hargens, 2007). Such an attitude and bodily attentiveness with nonverbal communication open up new possibilities for thinking, doing and being within learning experiences.

5) *Recognise online-offline capabilities and limitations*

Learning online (-offline) provides different mediating approaches, that is ways of considering the social role and type of interaction of fun learning opportunities and limitations, compared with face-to-face. What are the full-bodied aims of a learning experience, and what physicality and/or online technology is available? Sensory experiences are in some ways greater/more experiential, and in others smaller/lesser. For example, by not always seeing the ‘whole body’ on screen there can be a felt partiality to the relational experience. However, at the same time, the visibility of a person’s room in their background can bring an element of connection/novelty that is not necessarily present in face-to-face learning encounters. Informative literature on this principle included thinking with online ‘mediating artefacts’ (Engeström, 1987). Mediating artefacts are understood as tools, rules, procedures, and practices to negotiate representation/identity i.e., language, software etc.

6) *Sense measurement as rhythm and texture (placement of activities and tools) patterning qualities of experience*

Here measurement is focused on affects (emotional changes in someone/something), feelings (a mode of active and responsive engagement), and relationality: with self, other body-minds, and materials. Learning in the now is less focused on real time and output/productivity, and instead values felt time and the experiences of fun(s) as movements of embodied (un)learning, through a heightened sense of inter-relational presence. It expands beyond a reductionist neo-liberal agenda on so-called ‘life skills’ e.g., problem solving skills, critical thinking skills etc. Informative literature for this principle included the work of Ronkainen et al., (2021) who challenge the narrow focus of skill-based educational pursuits.

Now that I have outlined the literature informing the Guiding Principles and the micro study, let us consider the research method for the micro study – notably the pedagogical session plan for the online workshop. This inherently sought to embed the Six Principles and key attributes within the session delivery placing the researcher as an integral part of the group, by also assuming the role of workshop facilitator. I will return to the opportunities and challenges of these multiple roles in the conclusion.

Workshop planning as method: principles, materiality, mediating artefacts, and social arrangement

The Six Principles of fun-embodied-learning (Huxley, 2023) guided the design of the workshop and helped to articulate intentions as the facilitator and organise/design the tasks. I was curious to understand if the session was well received by participants and activated a space for alternative learning – focused on qualities of learning experiences, rather than outcomes/products. Hence, I am not presenting the poems as products or aesthetic artefacts themselves. The focus is on processes; being, doing and becoming. Planning was therefore a key part of the process and method of research, and involved designing a session plan including which guiding principles I thought would be most informative, as well as suggesting the type/use of a material/digital mediating artefact (Engeström, 1987), and the social arrangement (see Table 1).

Table 1: Workshop plan aligned to specific guiding principles, mediating artefacts, and social arrangement

No	Workshop activities (plan)	Which guiding principle(s) informed the design	Type & use of a material/digital mediating artefact	Social arrangement (individual, dyad or group)
1	Invitation/Welcome - Arting series; experimental - Spoken word & image; mad lib rules/invitation - Overview	(1) inhabiting learning spaces (2) novel ways of relating	Slide	Group with individual contributions elicited
2	What is the art form: what makes a poem a poem? Q Do you have any favourite poems? Traditional poetry from your	(1) inhabiting learning spaces (3) tempo & spontaneity	Film	Group (heavy facilitation)

	country? How does it make you feel?			
3	Poetic inquiry – How can poetry be used in research?	(1) inhabiting learning spaces	Slide	Group (heavy facilitation)
4	Embodied practice – knowing through our bodies	(3) tempo & spontaneity (4) verbal and non-verbal communication	Tapping and acknowledging parts of the learner's own body	Individual focus, but acknowledges the group
5	Workshop: Found Poetry (as a method for analysis) - What is found poetry? - How do you make a Found Poem? - Exercise - Sharing	(2) novel ways of relating (5) online-offline capabilities	Use of pens/paper in learners' own spaces, and/or use of Microsoft Word	Individual/dyad focus, but acknowledges the group
6	Adaptations and alternatives – your ideas?	(3) tempo & spontaneity	Slide/viewing crafted poems	Group (heavy facilitation)
7	Dialogue: how can found poetry be used to generate a two-way communication between young people and policymakers?	(4) verbal and non-verbal communication	Slide	Individual focus, but acknowledges the group
8	Reflection/feedback/stretching	(6) alternative concepts for measuring learning	Jamboard	Individual focus, but acknowledges the group

A challenge of such an approach is that it was quite time intensive, and sometimes I began with the principle, and at other times the activity came to mind first. For example, to start the session I knew that the principle of inhabiting learning spaces was important, interpreted as the importance of creating a welcoming, and collaborative space. Whereas for the energiser (number 4 in the table), I started with the need for the short activity and used the principle of verbal and non-verbal communication to help think what/how this might emerge. The relationship between activity and guiding principle is symbiotic, and therefore not as tidy/linear as the table suggests. However, it does provide a useful way to understand the ingredients of a fun-ing workshop, much as a recipe informs the cooking of a dish: orderly and accurate, but without necessarily noting the improvisational embellishments/changes/timings. These will be reflected upon in the conclusion.

A retrospective analysis of the findings: a researcher-facilitator's framing of critical incidents

It is not my intention in this article to discuss the affordances, or otherwise, of Zoom as a video conferencing platform for workshops and/or qualitative data collection. However, it is important to acknowledge that different learners experience the platform in diverse ways (Huxley, 2023), and that online methods can replicate, complement, and potentially improve traditional methods, including in-person interviews and focus groups (Archibald et al., 2019). Online synchronous video conferencing on Zoom, is a lived online-offline embodied experience (Huxley, 2023). It is within this context, I used a self-reflexive and emplaced ethnographic approach (Pink, 2011) to consider the workshop analysis.

An emplaced ethnographic approach means that the body is perceived as encountering its surroundings and the material elements (living/non-living) in any given specific space-times, and therefore is always contextually 'emplaced' (Pink, 2011: 347). Emplacement acknowledges that the performing body-mind is part of a geography of other body-minds and artefacts, in motion, enabling us to see each in relation and representation to the other. With this theoretical framing, I watched the recording of the workshop, considering if/how the intended guiding principles for a fun-embodied-learning experience were generated or otherwise. The workshop was recorded with the permission of the participants, and pseudonyms were used as part of the wider MAP project ethical clearance

and procedures with the University of Lincoln. The overall aim was to see if/how they could be used/adapted in a different context, and in so doing, activate a learning experience focused on qualities of the experience – novel and engaging processes – rather than the aesthetic of the outcome/poem.

The importance of reflective practice on the experiential aspects of teaching, facilitating, and coaching has a long history (e.g., Dewey, 1933; Freire, 1995; Noddings, 2001; Mosley Wetzel et al., 2017). In addition, the affordances of using Zoom recordings to mediate reflective practices are significant. According to Mosley Wetzel et al. (2017), visual forms of retrospective analysis, (in their case through video, in mine through Zoom), provide ‘evidence in support of reflection but add the additional affordance of returning more fully to the moment. Often, we want to hold our reflections still in time to understand, to just “slow down the moment”’ (p. 533). This was evident in my perceptions and notes of returning to the event, watching the recording, and choosing to pause and suspend time at certain moments, deemed critical.

Therefore, by building on a visual ‘retrospective analysis’ (Mosley Wetzel et al., 2017), my approach involved watching back the full recording, pausing on considerations of ‘critical incidents’, defined as vivid happenings that are considered significant or memorable (Woods, 1993). Several educational researchers use critical incidents to improve teaching practices, most notably Tripp (1993). Tripp (1993) states that the interpretation of the significance of an event makes it critical. Therefore, it is not something to be uncovered, from a critical realist (Zhang, 2022) perspective, but rather an interpretive inquiry, normally conducted with participants, to jointly seek out meanings. In this instance, a limitation is that I did not ask participants in the workshop, rather I observed, recalled, and noted my sense of criticality, retrospectively, centering instead the facilitators’ perspectives rather than the facilitators and participants. The criticality arises from an interpreted broader attunement, in the case of this workshop, with the guiding principles and mediating artefacts; they are crafted and created. The self-reflected critical incidents are shown in the far-right column of Table 2. I chose this understanding of ‘critical incidents’ because it aligns with Fincham’s (2016) suggestion that fun is a phenomenon that comes into being with the *recollection* of a specific moment.

One critical incident relating to the principle of crafting the tempo and allowing for spontaneity I recall in the second main activity of the session, discussing ‘What is the art form?’ Here I changed the pace of the learning activities by showing a short film and allowing for reflections. In watching the video I was struck by the question of, ‘Does anyone think poems are songs?’ This was not planned. It had resonance for a few participants, and a discussion on Greek poetry ensued. In addition, the purposeful pause and silence after reciting poems, an intentional space-time for reflection, also added a *quality of presence* (heightened awareness) to the learning experience.

Table 2: Summary of findings from the poetry workshop

No	Workshop activities (plan)	Guiding principle(s) informing the design	Method of delivery (mediating artefact; tools, language)	Ways in which associated qualities of learning experiences transpired (critical incidents as perceived by the researcher-facilitator)
1	Invitation/Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spoken word invitation & image. - acknowledge & read MAP poems, inviting reflection. - together adapt Mad Lib rules. - present overview. 	<p>learning spaces</p> <p>novel ways of relating</p>	<p>Slides – moving flower image, young person’s poem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creating an intentional atmosphere through spoken word and moving image at the start: “This moment right now is an invitation for you for us to experiment, play, grow, and heal. With how intentional chosen words, spoken and written can contribute towards making research processes and outputs more artful that is full of emotion, crystallised thought, visual and spoken connection.” - playful undoing, informality with relations e.g., Mad Lib rules. Encouraging thinking about our ‘space’ to create as a group. Participants write in the Teams chat. - “In this moment I honour the in you I open my to..... I seek to understand.... I appreciate.... We are.... Take these intentions along with us (also share and surprise participants that they are starting to write poetically!)
2	What is the art form: what makes a poem a poem? Q Do you have any favourite poems? Traditional poetry from your country? How does it make you feel?	spontaneity	Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - change in the pace and type of activities/learning games; 3-minute video clip on what makes a poem a poem. Reflective questions, slower. - spontaneity – does anyone think poems are songs? Conversation brings in Greek poetic culture. - silence and pause; impactful online after poems/comments. Didn’t feel awkward.
3	Poetic inquiry – How can poetry be used in research?	online-offline capabilities/limitations	Slide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sharing a slide and then asking for reflections; unable to see the chat so asked a colleague to share. Opportunity to bring in another member of the group.
4	Embodied practice – knowing through our bodies	<p>verbal and non-verbal communication</p> <p>spontaneity</p>	Group exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introduce embodied practice as coming from gut/heart. - invited to have screen on/off. - honour hands and arms; stroking; rub hands; acknowledge how they understand the world. Poets often talk of speaking ‘from the gut or heart’; exploring what that could mean for participants.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - heart and gut, armpits - aware of sensations in different parts of your body; bring an awareness of body into poetry writing/doing. - rough plan – developed as I felt in the moment. - non-verbal; watching others with cameras on and reacting; several participants really showed enjoyment
5	Workshop: Found Poetry (as a method for analysis) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is found poetry? - How Do You Make a Found Poem? - Exercise - Sharing 	online-offline capabilities novel ways of relating	Individual exercise – slide examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - intro found poetry. - give time to get pen, text. - give different options. - start cutting/writing collage. - modelling with each other on camera synchronously; unblurred my camera so all could see my transcript and modelling (emplaced) - material: cutting/tearing transcript and arranging on table. - Could use Teams chat! - make camera mobile to show phrases emerging on my desk (moved my camera closer to modelling) - talking directly to them
6	Sharing poems	spontaneity	Slide/viewing all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Part B of creating found poem: phrases that respond to ‘how can art forms contribute towards education?’ - Play with silence - give options. - Sharing back; see material poems created, and participants' physical spaces: 2 young people together from Rwanda, AB screen shares. - young Nepali ‘I found the process very simple. I am not a poetic person, but I found it doable. I thought before it would be very difficult, but I came to know this process.’ - ‘It takes courage to play with the words...it feels scary at first...’
7	Dialogue: how can found poetry be used to generate a two-way communication between young people and policymakers?	tempo (spontaneity)	Slide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more reflective/slower - poetry and body maps (one participant shares screen) - invite others to read and join in reading poems [didn't fully work, but gave me an idea for a future session] - new ideas from a participant: dance artist responded to poems through movement at a conference (across art forms)
8	Reflection/feedback/stretching	alternative concepts for measuring learning	Jamboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - notion of measuring – framing a moment through felt time i.e. strong emotions (process orientated) - alternative learning is stretching away from the familiar, healthy challenge. - see Figure 2: Jamboard feedback. - colleagues spontaneously started to upload their digital poems, reflecting the ‘practical’ experience of embodied making as important



Figure 2: the Jamboard feedback

Fun-ing through poetry: a discussion

Having shared the findings of the workshop (through Table 2), let us consider how the findings extend the literature/understanding of the Six Guiding Principles:

1) Inhabit the learning space

This principle is concerned with the attentiveness to the sensory 'now' of the learning experience and creating a hypersensitivity of being as 'presence,' often with the unexpected (Coonfield et al., 2012). Performing spoken word helped to generate intrigue in the session, as witnessed in the video playback, and set a collaborative and open learning atmosphere. To further understand this interviews with the participants could be conducted.

2) Consider novel ways of relating to each other

This principle is concerned with an explicit playful undoing. By facilitating group intention setting near the start of the workshop, through the unexpected creation of playful and poetic rules for the session, participants appeared to enjoy generating nonformal rules. I provided the skeleton outline from which participants completed the gaps in the Zoom chat. For example, 'In this moment, I am here with you'. 'I honour the bravery in you.' This was an online way of enabling the learner to notice/experience their learning as something that occurs within their own body-mind i.e. the answers they individually provided, *and* with others i.e. the collective poetic statements/rules (Yorks et al., 2006).

3) Craft the tempo of a learning experience (allowing for spontaneity)

The tempo and pace of learning in fun-ing is important. Through disciplined improvisation (Sawyer, 2004) both structure and spontaneity, are crucial for a creative pedagogic practice. Hence near the start I showed a short film on 'What is poetry' and encouraged learners' reflections on the video – this slower pace allowed learners to consider their assumptions about poetry. This was in contrast to the fast-paced generation of the previous exercise (developing the playful and poetic rules).

4) Embrace verbal and non-verbal ways of communicating

A core aspect of this principle of fun-ing is an attitude of 'shaking off of constraints' (Gordon and Esbjorn-Hargens, 2007). In the workshop, I intentionally chose to remind learners to be aware of the sensations in distinct parts of their bodies through an energiser of patting, stroking, and acknowledging certain body parts, such as their arms,

heart, and armpits. This served two purposes, firstly that poetry requires a subtle engagement of sensing with and through the body, but also in relation to a fun-ing pedagogy: a bodily attentiveness with nonverbal communication opens up new possibilities for thinking, doing and being within learning experiences.

5) Recognise online-offline capabilities and limitations

Learning online (-offline) provides different mediating approaches, that is ways of considering the social role and type of interaction of fun learning opportunities and limitations, compared with face-to-face. In the workshop, during the segment on creating found poetry, we utilized both our individual offline spaces and the collective digital/online screen. This being 'here and there', was most notable when I demonstrated the cutting/tearing of a transcript to begin to craft a poem, arranging phrases of interest on my table, and showing this through moving a portable camera - 'a mediating artefact' (Engestrom, 1987) the process for the learners on screen. Participants chose, scaffolding their own learning, to upload their poems as images or in the chat box, reconnecting the offline with the online. This also emphasises the mediational aspects of socio-cultural-material learning more broadly, whereby processes of thinking, sensing, and learning are not contained within individual minds, but are distributed and negotiated, across persons, tools (artefacts), and learning environments (Passarelli and Kolb, 2011).

6) Sense measurement as rhythm and texture (placement of activities and tools) patterning qualities of experience

Here measurement is understood as recording felt time – that is the main affects (emotional changes in someone/something), feelings (a mode of active and responsive engagement), and relations: with self, other body-minds, and materials. I found it challenging to move away from conventional understandings of measurement, and so combined both a traditional way of measuring i.e. asking questions and gathering feedback on what worked well or could be improved, and within this also trying to capture the key emotional, responsive and relational changes in the learners that consider the patterning of activities/tools as well. In a future session, I would consider asking questions more related to learners' emotions and responsive engagement across the main parts of the workshop. I would ideally do this as a group at the end of the workshop, and then follow up with individual interviews to allow for further reflection.

Having discussed the findings concerning the Six principles and wider literature, let's now return to the two key research questions: 1) Can the Six principles be applied to a different learning context? 2) If so, how? How can a playful and embodied educational approach (fun-ing) foreground qualities of learning experience during an online poetry workshop?

Having developed the concept, model and Six principles of fun-ing in a different context; with an alternative sport and play for education charity, rather than with an arts-based applied research project, it was important to test the assumption that the Six principles can be applied elsewhere. There are many ways to apply them. Should they be used chronologically? Does it matter if there is an emphasis on some more than others? It was important to keep them as a loose framework to honour that learning/education is a process of generation and not of control. I often work with the notion of 'disciplined improvisation' (Sawyer, 2004) in this regard, structure, and spontaneity, are both crucial for a creative pedagogic practice. This interplay/dance between the two will vary from facilitator and group. However, a dialogic and collaborative approach is always essential.

Based on the feedback I received during the session, and on the Jamboard, it suggests that the intention to generate qualities of the learning experience was achieved. In particular, the manifestation of the first three principles/qualities of learning experience were most apparent. This could be due to several different reasons, including that my attention may have been on them more simply for their chronological order. Or was there something intrinsically about the type of workshop i.e., arts-based/poetry that generated/ aligned to these? A more detailed, and layered method, including interviews with participants, would be required to begin to respond to these questions.

The different setting (and positionality of myself as researcher-facilitator-poet) may have contributed to how I understood that fun was interpreted by others. In particular, I could see two types of fun evident in this poetry workshop setting: 'learning to learn' and 'social spaces of possibility' conveyed through two participants' expressions of finding the courage to try: "I am not a poetic person, but I found it doable. I thought before it would be very difficult, but I came to know this process." Furthermore, "It takes courage to play with the words...it feels scary at first...". The experience was both a personal and a collective one. It encouraged some participants to go beyond what they understood of both the topic, and themselves.

Intentionally facilitating and activating spaces of fun-ing (an alternative learning/educational approach) did generate *qualities of learning experiences* (through the guiding principles). The first three principles/qualities seem to have more examples in Table 2. Whether this was due to a personal bias, an ease with their themes and how to

translate these into practice is unclear, however focusing on: inhabiting learning spaces; novel ways to relate to each other; and pacing activities, including spontaneity, are likely to have contributed towards positive feedback in terms of how the session made participants feel.

Conclusion, challenges, and implications

The Six principles, invite in, an embodied and experiential value system that consider learning spaces; novel ways of relating; spontaneity; verbal and non-verbal communication; online-offline capabilities; and alternative concepts for measuring learning based on feelings/affects. They are intended as a generative way of extending beyond the over-emphasis in many educational approaches, on skills acquisition and learning outcomes alone. The principles require further interrogation, expansion, and adaptation in different learning contexts; however, they do invite alternative possibilities concerning the future of learning and teaching both for creativity and with/through creativity, specifically poetic inquiry.

In particular, the Six principles should be adapted further in culturally situated arts-based settings. This condensed micro ethnographic study raises further questions such as, 'What do considerations of presence and mediating artefacts look like in other art-based learning contexts? How do different art forms affect/alter how the guiding principles can be interpreted and vice versa? There is much to be further explored!

Three main challenges provide future opportunities for further research. Firstly, the lack of post-interviews with participants. These would have helped to unpack a multiplicity and perhaps deeper level of interpretation, beyond my interpretations, but also offer participants another opportunity for feedback, retrospectively, away from the group. Secondly, by taking on the role of researcher and facilitator my energies during the workshop were split between delivering the session and reflecting on what was happening. However, my researcher identity/role came to the fore during the retrospective analysis of watching the recording and taking notes, on moments deemed critical. In the future, it would be beneficial to co-facilitate a workshop and understand the choices and interpretations that a peer educationalist/poet/artist might make. Thirdly, the nature of a micro-study of a two-hour workshop. This was both intentional and pragmatic. Intentional in that specific moments/instances of learning have meaning: an individual experience can stay with a learner for a lifetime. Similarly, as ethnographer's individual moments are selected and shaped within the socio-cultural patterning of a longer-term study – so this is a reminder not to forget the individual/small within the whole. However, it was also partly pragmatic, in my role as a Post Doc I was often facilitating and supporting other team member's research, including their ARTing workshops within the broader study. Therefore, This was an opportunity to bring my research directly into alignment with the broader project aims.

Three key implications of this micro-study for educationalists/artists/researchers to take forward:

1. applying fun-ing to an online workshop can bring the feeling body (body-mind) back into a learning space.
2. there are some adaptations that I might make for a future workshop, including moments of collective reading and play-working with the sounding of poetry online-offline; and
3. the Six Guiding Principles have resonance in another research context (to greater/lesser degrees).

Finally, the personal *and* collective experience encouraged some of the participants to *go beyond* their understanding of the topic of found poetry in research, and to also acknowledge their own expansion and growth in their creative capabilities. Expanding knowledge on a topic, and of oneself concerning other mind – bodies – materials, is a definition of learning in and of itself. Indeed, this was my own experience as the facilitator conducting such a workshop, and seeking to understand if fun-ing can be applied in a very different context to its origins. Therefore, This practice paper contributes to making the case that fun-ing and its focus on qualities of a learning experience deserve far more attention in both non-formal and formal learning environments. Learning to generate feelings, sensations, affects, must not be under-valued. Just like fun.

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