



### What do you mean by play?

If you have got this far and are interested in participating in PLAYI, you already know how complex and difficult it can be to define play. The Getting to Know section in *The Value of Play in HE* is one that discusses this specifically, while the topic recurs throughout the book.

Otherwise, here is some shorthand for how I am defining play, as opposed to something else. I hope it is self-explanatory and sufficiently short, while not being too rigid or simplistic. All I really want to do is help you, as a potential participant, separate out when you are talking about play, and when you are talking about creativity, innovation, problem-based learning, experiential, learning or something else. Of course, play and playfulness may feature in any of these things, but not necessarily, and not all of the time. They are not synonyms.

Play can be free exploration of experience, or conformation to a set of rules and behaviours within a special space. It can be extrovert, joyful and interactive with others, or internal and solitary.

This is the description I came up with (in the context of much more consideration) in *The Value of Play in HE*:

Play is an absorbing activity which brings satisfaction and learning at some point and of some kind. It has potentially limitless forms and can conjure infinite play moods. It may be internal or external, solo or with others. In higher education, play as part of the curriculum can be introduced by the educator, co-created with students or designed by them. Play can be both autonomous and guided; allowing some flexibility for students to engage as they choose. Playful behaviours are also often visible outside play-based activity. Attitudes to play may be shaped by the experiences and subjective preferences of players and those observing the play. For some players, feeling able to play may benefit from a sense of permission, trust and an encouraging atmosphere.

(James, 2022:93-94)

And here is the diagram of play types which were cited by participants in *The Value of Play in HE*. Once again, these are not offered to limit your thinking, but make some suggestions, if you need them.

# gallery

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## TYPES OF PLAY IN HIGHER EDUCATION



Figure G12. Types of play in higher education (1)

James, 2022: 107

If you are still in any doubt as to whether or not you are using play in HE with AI, then do please contact me on the email below. I'll be happy to hear from you.

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