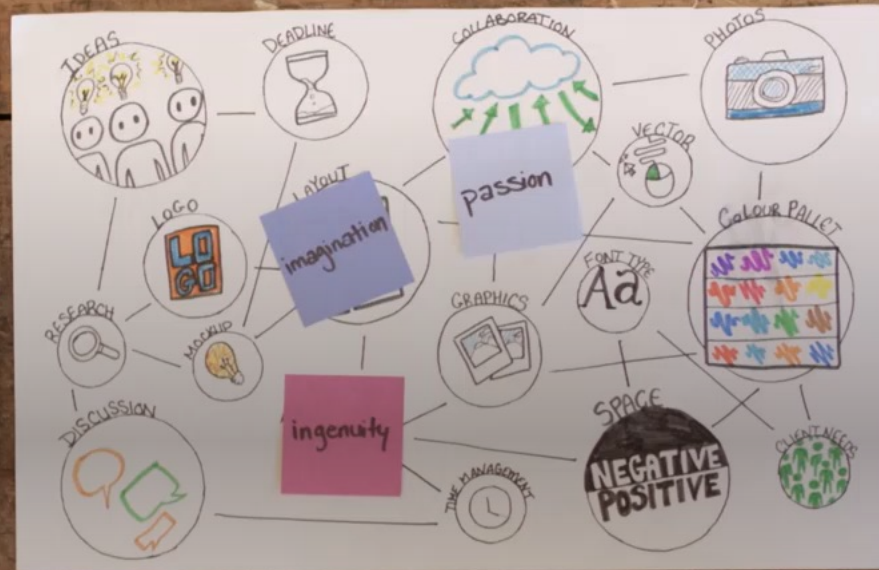


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Beyond engagement: designing
learning students want to return to

Many of us struggle with attendance

What would make your lecture
unmissable and the course (more)
enjoyable?



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Flow: The theory of optimal experience

- Flow was coined by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
- "The holistic sensation that people feel when they act with total involvement" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, p. 36)
- Characterised by a deep concentration and engagement with an intense sense of control, interest and enjoyment
- Conditions for Flow
 - Clear goals
 - Balance between challenge and skill
 - Immediate feedback



Engagement and Enjoyment of Learning

- Engagement may be described as the extent to which students participate or invest efforts while enjoyment is a positive emotional experience associated with the learning (process, content or outcome).

Seemiller et al., (2021)

- Students' views of what makes learning enjoyable
- 2057 participants from the US and Brazil
- Students enjoy learning when they feel capable, connected (to the material, peers, teacher and enjoy learning from enthusiastic teachers)
- see relevance to life, career and future
- *keep up with conversations, intellectual debate, perceived as intelligent

Build interactive feedback session to improve course design and student experience (Beyond SELT)

Alawad et al., (2026)

- How can enjoyment of learning be reliably measured?
- 112 participants from the UAE
- Developed a learning enjoyment scale based on learning experiences associated with enjoyment and contextual factors
- Students reported greater enjoyment conditions in problem-based type activities and interactive approaches
- Essentially when they can get some sort of tangible result by applying the knowledge

Enjoyment comes from feeling challenged and having a sense of fulfilment once the challenge is conquered

Wang et al., (2026)

- Conditions associated with enjoyment, why do students experience or lose enjoyment
- 350 participants from China
- While there is a strong positive relationship between engagement and enjoyment, engagement $\neq$ enjoyment
- Students may be actively engaged due to examination and performance pressures and a heavy focus on outcome

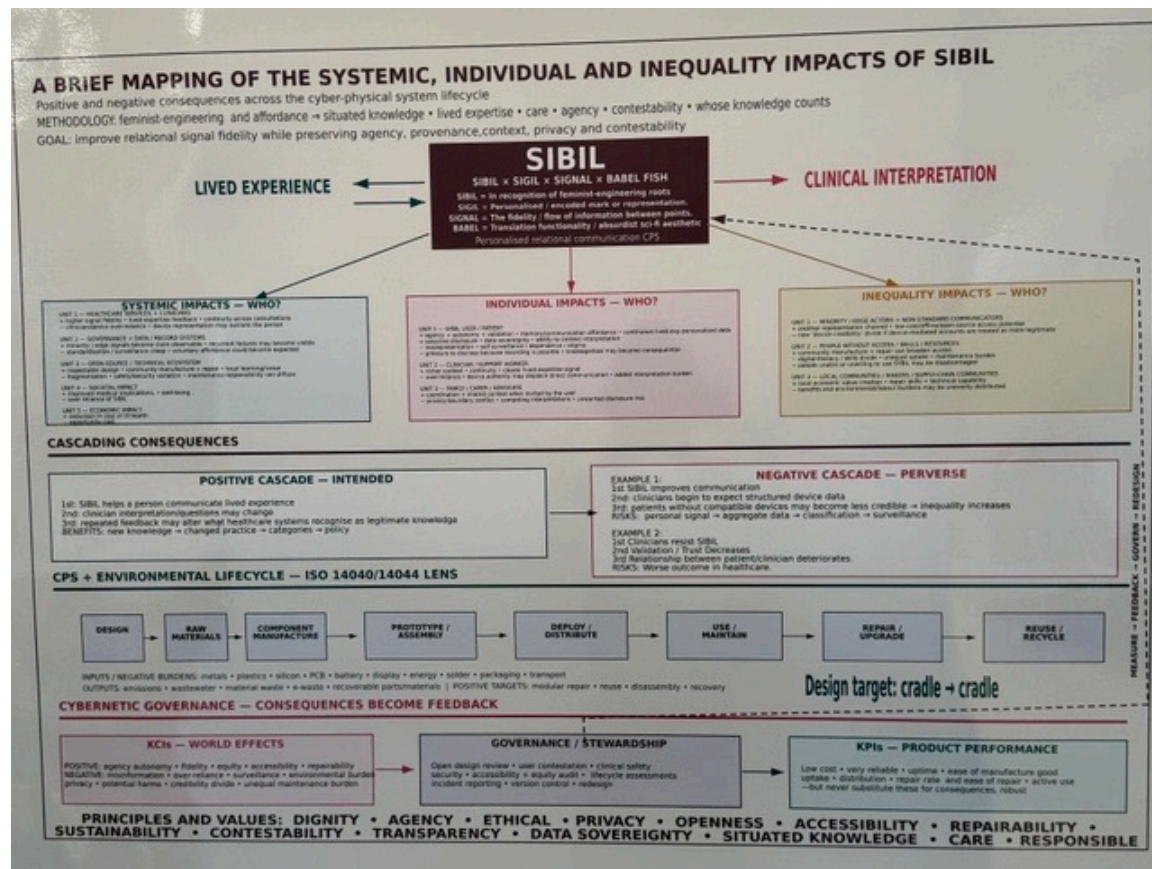
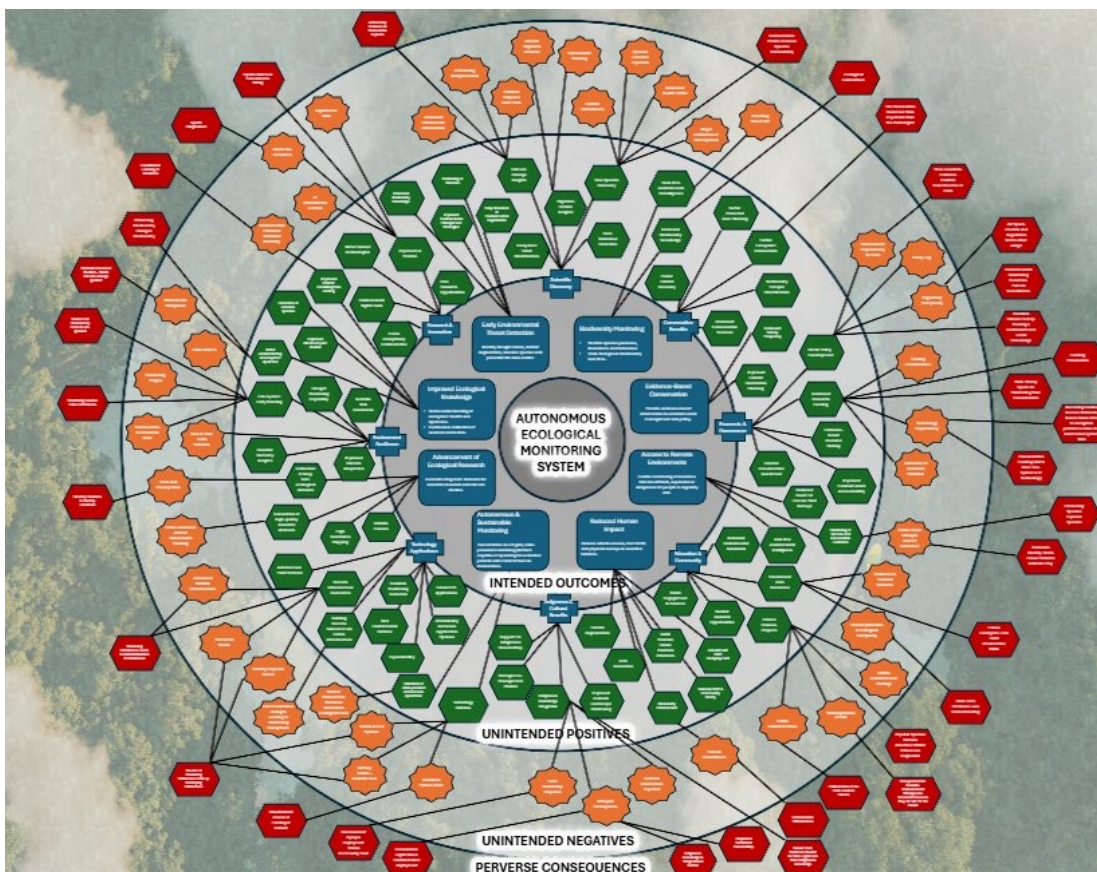
Enjoyment fosters curiosity beyond the immediate requirements of the course

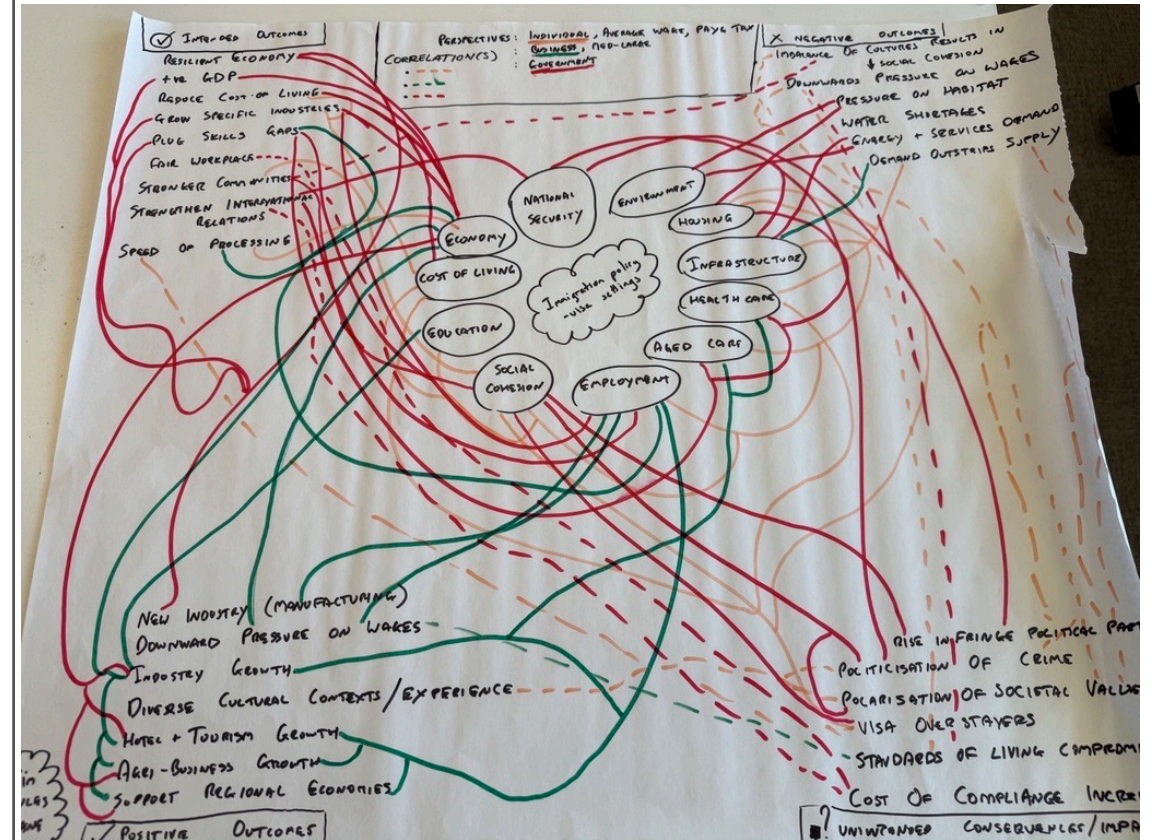
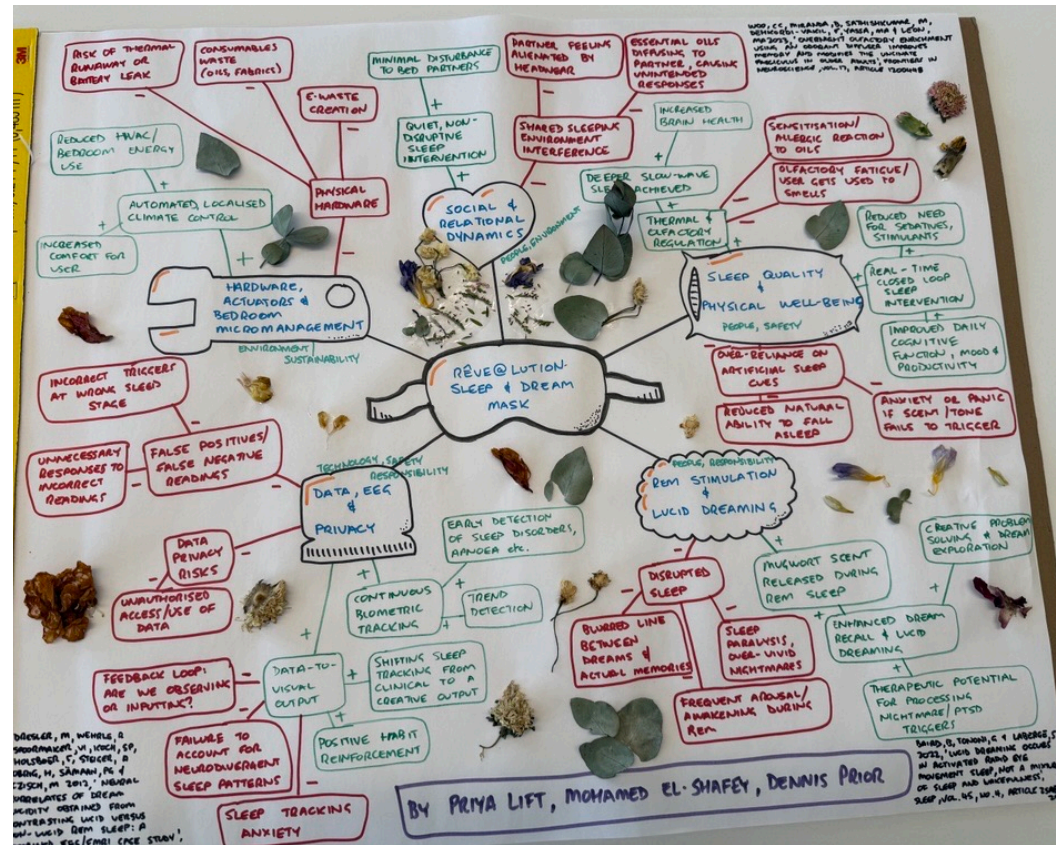
A teacher isn't just a transmitter of knowledge, but should create conditions where learning is enjoyable

The ARC of designing learning with enjoyment in mind

- Enjoyment is connected to satisfaction of psychological needs such as:
 - Autonomy – having agency
 - Relatedness – feeling connected
 - Competence – feeling capable
- Students are more likely to go beyond engagement and enjoy learning when they perceive the task as valuable and appropriately challenging
- May require being adaptable and making modifications **where possible** to enhance students experience and the value of the task









Wrap up...

Making learning enjoyable doesn't mean making it easier or merely entertaining, rather it is to help students engage meaningfully beyond assessments and outcomes, but due to deep satisfaction that comes with seeing value both in the short term and into the future.

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