

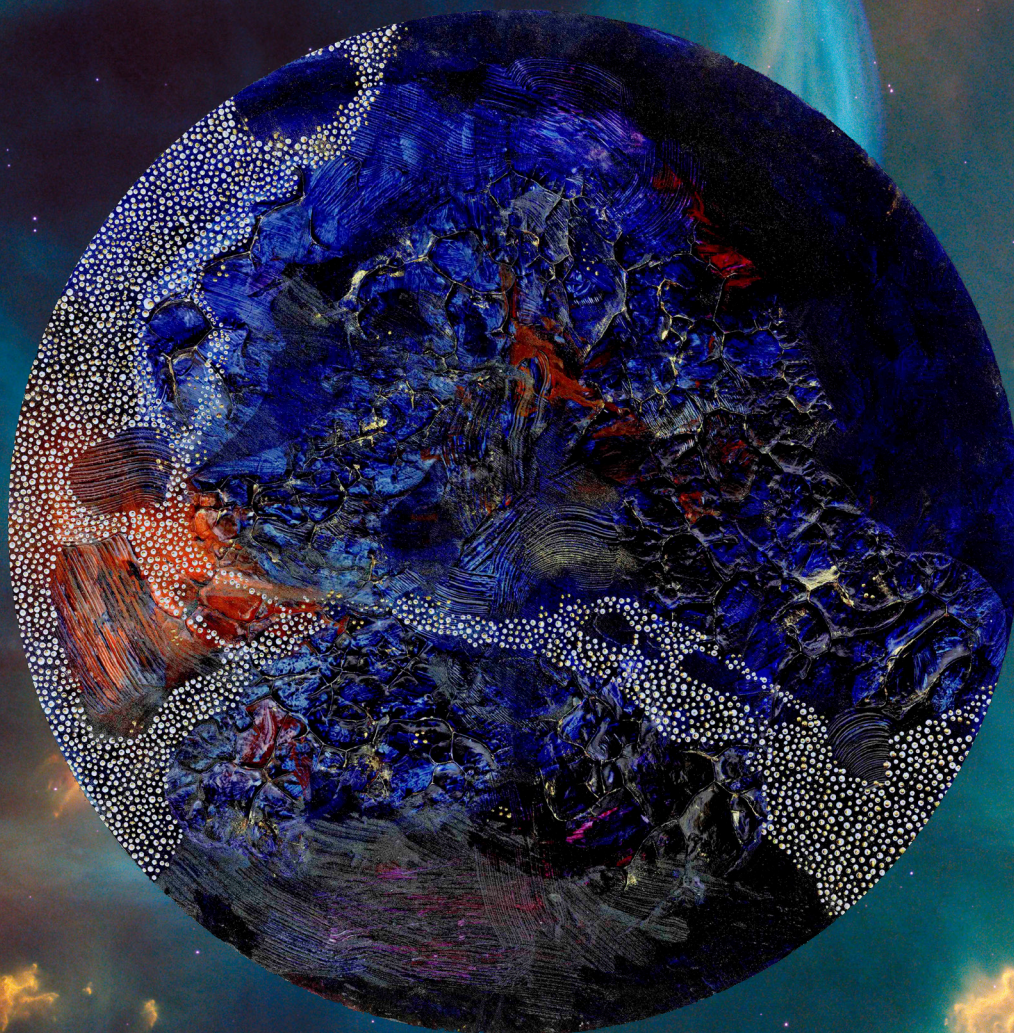


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WORLD FUTURES STUDIES FEDERATION
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launched a job call and plan to hire both international and local faculty to deliver futures courses in Qazaq, Russian, and English languages starting in September 2019. Instead of a formal vision and mission statement, we employ three values to set out our intentions. First, curiosity lies at the heart of futures work. We seek to embody this defining characteristic in all that we do by staging provocations that simultaneously instigate and inspire. Second, commensality is typically defined as “sharing a table” and centers on how relationships and partnerships are formed and maintained. We want to build lasting, fruitful, and mutually-beneficial connections with communities, citizens, and colleagues. In principle as well as practice, QRIFS aims to be as collaborative as possible. Third, contextuality keeps us questioning our own positionality and how we can ethically operate with close attentiveness toward the places and peoples who engage with our work.

Since language situates context, QRIFS will focus on making resources available in local languages (Qazaq and Russian), and, as with the university, we will release content in three languages: Qazaq, Russian, and English. Local perspectives are very much at the forefront of our thinking and subsequent practice. Our team is currently developing projects on Qazaq identity and consumer culture, Muslim Futures in Central Asia, and postcards from the future(s) of Qazaqstan. We very much want to become an integral part of the World Futures Studies Federation (WFSF) community and plan to send a delegation to Mexico City for the WFSF XXIII World Conference. We will certainly keep everyone updated on our journey. If you are in the neighborhood, want to visit Almaty, or have as strong desire to see dynamic change unfold firsthand, you are cordially invited to come and share a table with us. Surf’s up!

Dr. John A. Sweeney
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Conversations on the Future We Want: Gaming

An Interview with Dana Klisanin, Ph.D.

by Dr. Claire Nelson

The United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted in 2015 as the universal call to action to end poverty and hunger, protect the planet and ensure inclusion, peace and prosperity for all by 2030. However, without active individual involvement, Agenda 2030 is not capable of delivering wide scale impact. Understanding of the SDGs and actions towards achieving them should be integrated in everyday lives of ordinary people. We need ways to reach people in ways that speak to them and offer content in a form that allows them to engage.

In this interview we hear from DANA KLISANIN, a WFSF Board member, psychologist and futurist who has designed a game that aims to educate and empower youth around the SDGs. Dana has formed partnerships with over a dozen nonprofit organizations and nongovernmental organiza-



tions—including WFSF—to bring her vision to fruition.

Help us understand the space. What is Gamification? Is it the same as Serious Games and Game-based Learning?

Gamification refers to the use of common game elements to influence behavior. A tiered reward structure, for example can encourage participation in a fitness routine, or facilitate the achievement of various educational goals.

Game-based Learning refers to the use of games to educate through play. This can include board games, video games, or other game play, including outdoor games. Parents and teachers have been using game based learning for years. One of my earliest memories of school was learning the multiplication tables through a game that involved racing a rocket (made of construction paper) to the moon. Game-based Learning can also refer to the design of entire curriculums. Quest to Learn, a NYC-based school, is one example of a school that integrates game-based learning in this way. To learn about biology, for example, students might spend the year working in a fictional biotech company where their job includes cloning dinosaurs and maintaining the appropriate ecosystem to support them.

Serious Games is a term that refers to games that have another purpose other than entertainment. They are used across a wide variety of professions and industries, including Futures.

Why gamify the SDGs? And how do you make a game out

of a topic as serious as designing a policy mix for international development?

There are many good reasons to gamify the SDGs; however, two of the most important are first, to educate the public and second, to create innovative ways to attain the Goals. Gamifying the SDGs can motivate people to learn about them, and it can also encourage behavior that supports their attainment. As to how to make a game out of a topic as serious as designing a policy mix for international development, I can only speak to my own approach, which is to include in the design the means for players to take action to achieve the goals. Educating without providing tools for action is a recipe for learned helplessness, apathy, and depression—conditions that are on the rise.

Who is Cyberhero League designed for? How does one play the game and what is the goal of the game?

The game, *Cyberhero League*, is designed for youth, ages nine & up. The overarching goal is to help young people learn that they can use digital technology heroically—to help other people, animals, and the environment. The project grew out of the desire to bring the “cyberhero” archetype out of the academic literature so the younger generation could grow up with the knowledge that an antithesis to the “cyberbully” exists—giving them an opposite role model to embody. Gaming is a form of storytelling and ultimately, since we aim to expand the mythic and heroic imaginations, it felt like a good place to reach our target

demographic.

Cyberhero League is an example of Game-based Learning. Social-emotional learning is a big part of the project, but physical activity and citizen activism play important roles. The game is designed around a series of quests tied to the missions of our nonprofit partners. In the process of completing quests, players earn a variety of medallions, badges, and crests—the achievement of which unlocks aid for our nonprofit partners. We’ve also partnered with the United Nations to achieve the SDGs. To make the game’s goals more manage-



able, and fun, we’ve grouped the 17 SDGs into 5 Crests—“Vital,” “Essential,” “Cardinal,” “Planetary,” and “Universal.” In addition to learning about the SDGs, Players actually help achieve the Goals through participating in Awareness Events—community-based events that include activities such as planting trees and recycling.

What gamification and games-learning trends are you seeing now, and what do you see on the horizon for games as tools of empowerment and engagement?

Augmented reality (AR) and Virtual reality (VR)

are trends in gaming and game-based learning. Augmented reality is being used successfully in museums, schools, and national parks. On the horizon, the Internet of Things will have a huge impact on gaming—not only will it usher in new types of game play, but it will also impact Game-based Learning. I’m interested in designing games that support engagement with the natural world. Children—and adults—we all need to spend time in and with the natural world. That’s how we learn to love nature—and ultimately, what moves us to protect it.

What and where next?

My next project, Gaia Genome Project, is a participatory art project that involves gaming and citizen science. In molecular biology, the genome of an organism is its hereditary information encoded in DNA. Thus, in strictly scientific terms, the “Gaia genome” would consist of the hereditary information encoded in the DNA of every organism living on Earth. However, rather than mapping DNA, through creatively envisioning an outward expression of that map, the goal of the artwork is to help people visually see, cognitively understand, and emotionally experience the interconnection between all life forms. The aim is to motivate participants to take actions to stop the tide of environmental destruction and support sustainable futures. The Gaia Genome Project asks participants to imagine each specie as part of a larger sequence, a sequence that can’t be understood until the whole is present. The artwork will evolve in tandem with participation—I’m currently seeking collaborators and philanthropists.



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