

If It Feels Real, It Matters: Co-Creating A Digital Simulation Game.

A reflective partnership between Fashion Business & Technology, students, alumni and FSE eLearning

**From workshop activity to mobile-friendly
scenario-based simulation game**

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What the project shows

The project makes the case for early, open collaboration: eLearning colleagues helped rethink the learning, not just digitize an activity.

Key shift

From “build this” to “help us design the learning”.

01

The workshop showed promise

Strong engagement revealed value, but time and physical delivery limited reflection, personal relevance and feedback depth.

02

Partnership changed the brief

Academics brought the pedagogical challenge; eLearning shaped interactivity, accessibility, visual design and user experience.

03

Digital format deepened reflection

Students can revisit decisions, explore alternative pathways and justify evidence-based choices beyond the live session.

04

The platform can keep evolving

Future iterations can add richer scenarios, personalised guidance and AI-enabled support where appropriate.

Why this project mattered

The starting point was not technology. It was a recurring teaching challenge.

Students in fashion business often face professional decisions where evidence is partial, risk is real and there is no single “right” answer.

01

Confidence

Moving from
“what is the
answer?” to
“what judgement
can I defend?”

02

Ambiguity

Practising
choices when
the scenario is
messy,
incomplete and
fast-moving.

03

Evidence

Linking brand,
consumer, trend
and commercial
data to
decisions.

Design challenge: create a safe, inclusive space to rehearse risk analysis before assessment and professional practice.

Partnership at a glance

A shared culture where academic, technical, student and industry expertise shaped the learning.

2

academics

pedagogy
+
curriculum

3

**eLearning
specialists**

digital design
+
UX

134

students

Feedback
+
lived
experience

6

**industry
partners**

authentic
practice
insight

The value came from partnership, not production: each group brought a form of expertise the others did not have.

That shared ownership helped the simulation feel authentic, accessible and useful rather than “extra tech”.

From workshop prototype to digital simulation

We kept the learning intent and changed the format so students could practise individually, revisit and reflect.



Same scenarios; stronger access, feedback and replay.

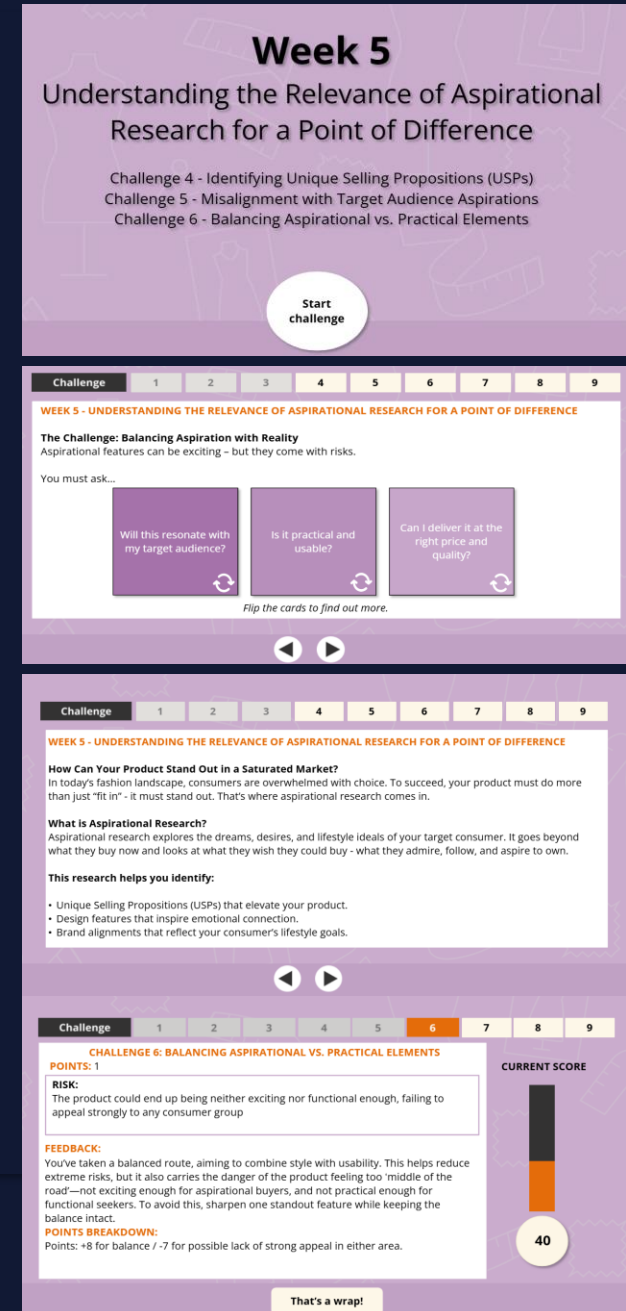
What we built

A scenario-based simulation game that turns workshop dilemmas into active, accessible digital practice.

Students encounter realistic fashion business scenarios, choose a route, justify their reasoning and see feedback on risk, opportunity and trade-offs.



Mobile-friendly. VLE-hosted. Built around inclusive active learning rather than novelty.



Design principles for inclusive active learning

The collaboration turned a good idea into a learning experience students could actually use.



Start with judgement

Design around moments where students must weigh evidence and risk.



Keep it authentic

Use discipline-specific scenarios that feel close to future practice.



Make ambiguity safe

Low-stakes choices let students try, compare and revise.



Treat feedback as pedagogy

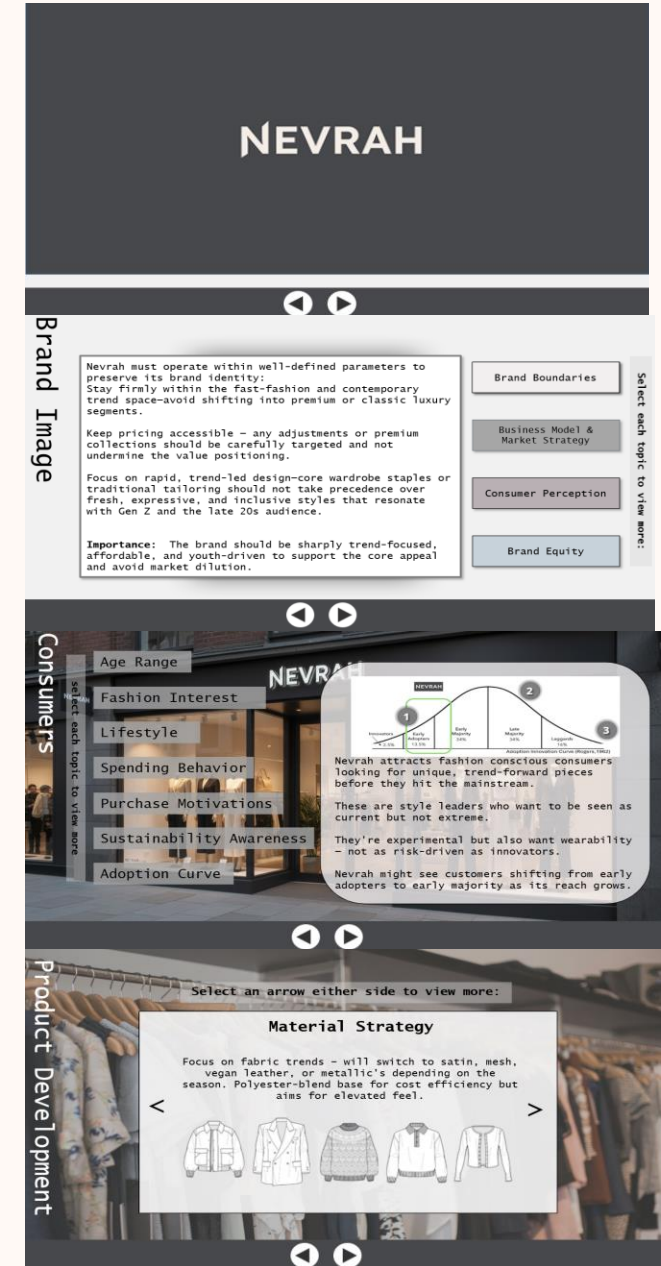
Feedback explains consequences, not just correctness.



Design for access

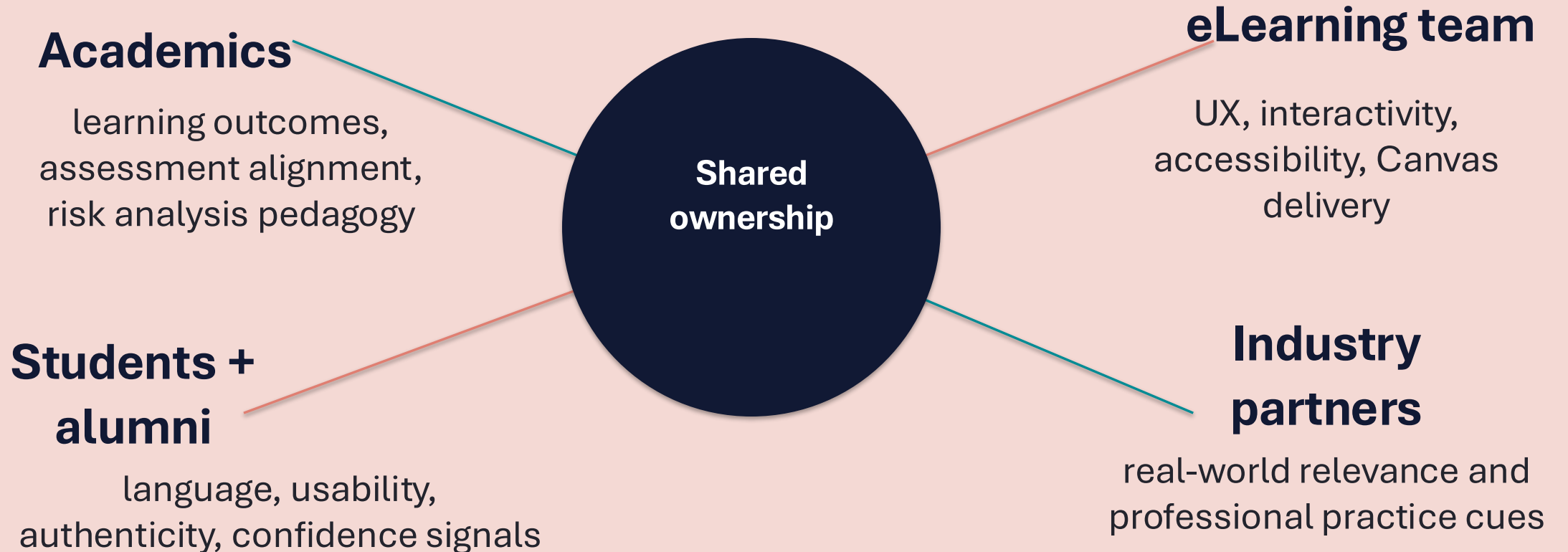
Mobile-friendly, familiar platforms and clear navigation reduce friction.

Principle: technology served the learning problem — not the other way round.



A partnership model for digital learning

Equitable partnership meant expertise moved in several directions, not through a one-way handover.



The bridge between academic theory and professional practice was built through conversation, prototyping and iteration.

Inside the development journey

Not a service request !!

The “game” became a shared design space for pedagogy, narrative, technology and learner experience.

01

Pedagogical framing

What judgement should students practise?

02

Narrative design

What scenario feels authentic but not obvious?

03

Digital interactivity

How do choices, scoring and feedback work?

04

UX + accessibility

Can every learner access, navigate and replay?

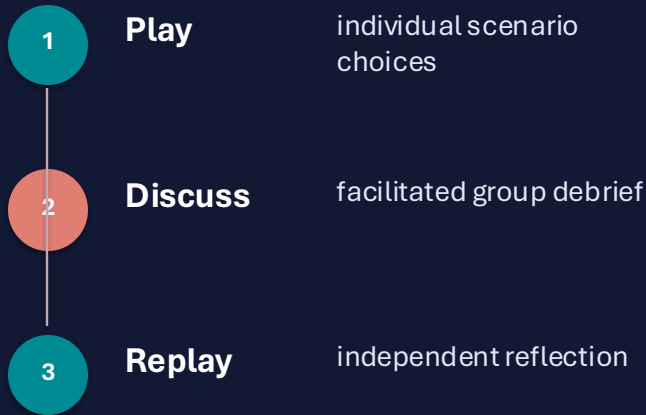
05

Iterative refinement

What did student use reveal?

“The eLearning team didn’t just build what we asked for — they helped us rethink what the learning could be.”

Blended by design



The game worked because it was embedded in teaching practice — not added on as a separate tool.

Delivery in practice

Students played individually;
learning happened collectively.

Embedded in workshops

The activity sat inside normal module rhythm, not as a separate “tech session”.

Facilitated discussion

Staff used decisions and outcomes as prompts for group debrief and coaching.

Independent access

Canvas delivery allowed replay, reflection and device flexibility.

Inclusive engagement

Clear navigation and familiar tools helped all learners participate meaningfully.

Evidence of value

Evaluation helped us see where the simulation supported confidence, engagement and applied reasoning.

73%

overall play rate

305 attendances from 417
possible places across
three gameplay weeks

37

focus-group students

qualitative feedback on
usability, confidence and
learning outcomes

100%

reported confidence

students reporting
confidence with decisions
by Week 8

Student voice: “It felt much closer to real industry decision-making. You had to justify your choices, not just get the right answer.”

Reflective insights from the partnership

The project changed more than a teaching activity; it changed how we worked together.

What partnership enabled

- eLearning colleagues helped rethink what the learning could be.
- Authentic scenarios bridged academic theory and professional practice.
- Replay made reflection possible beyond the single workshop.
- The resource can evolve with teaching needs and emerging technologies.

What we had to learn

- Start with a pedagogical challenge, not a fixed build brief.
- Co-creation takes time; early alignment prevents late redesign.
- Usability and feedback are pedagogical, not finishing touches.
- Equity means designing with learners, not only for them.

Reflection: the strongest outcome was not just the simulation itself, but the transferable partnership capability it created.

Start with one messy decision.

Then build the partnership that helps students practise it safely, inclusively and authentically.

Where could a scenario-based simulation help your learners develop confidence with ambiguity, risk and evidence-based judgement?

Talk: academics + students + alumni + eLearning + industry partners

Five ways to start

- 1 Name the messy decision**
Where judgement, not recall, is needed.
- 2 Invite eLearning early**
Co-design before the brief is fixed.
- 3 Prototype visibly**
Test language, scenarios and feedback.
- 4 Design reflection**
Plan replay, debrief and guidance.
- 5 Leave room to grow**
Enable richer scenarios and future support.

Biographies

Academic Team Members:

Rachel Studd | Reader in Design

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Rachel Studd is a Reader in Design. Rachel is a Teaching and Scholarship academic whose work focuses on developing experiential and gamified pedagogies that strengthen transition, belonging, and community within higher education. Her scholarship explores how inclusive learning design and student partnerships enhance confidence, connection, and engagement across the student journey.

Rachel Parker-Strak | Reader in Fashion Buying &

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Rachel Parker-Strak is a Reader in Fashion Buying and Merchandising. Rachel's scholarship activity revolves around developing pedagogy that fosters a sense of belonging and community within the higher education environment, as well as teaching and learning practice. Focusing on embedding belonging and measuring the impact this has on the student journey.

Learning Technology Team Members:

Phil Boulton | Assistant e-Learning Manager

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With expertise in content creation, web development, and AI tools, Phil focuses on developing engaging and accessible digital learning experiences. For this project, he contributed to the layout and design of the game, utilising AI image generation to create visually appealing and pedagogically suitable assets that enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Sharon Gardner | Learning Technologist

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Sharon is a Learning Technologist focusing on the design and development of pedagogically innovative applications, supporting curriculum enhancement, staff development, and inclusive digital learning experiences for diverse student communities. Sharon developed the Javascript that drives the scoring mechanism in the Game.

Georgie Hopkinson | Learning Technologist

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Georgie works within the E-Learning Team. She has extensive experience with the Articulate suite and specialises in digital learning design, with a focus on scenario-based learning. In the game Georgie developed realistic, industry-informed scenarios inspired by real-world fashion brands, with accessibility embedded throughout.