Preface

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When I started work at Aston Business School, speaking to colleagues across the Business School I was struck by the number of colleagues using games, experiments and simulations to enhance the learning and teaching in their modules. Some colleagues very effectively use very simple games and experiments like the ones I have used for many years in my own teaching, but I was also impressed by the number of colleagues using, and in some cases developing, sophisticated games and simulations to be played online, including through mobile phone game apps. This led to the development of A-Game, ‘Aston Games in Education’. It is commonplace for universities, faculties and departments to have specialist research centres, but while I am sure there are similar teaching and learning specialised centres bringing together colleagues with a shared interest in a specific pedagogy I didn’t know of any. A-Game brings together colleagues from across Aston Business School and Aston Law School, providing opportunities for us to share our best practice. While increasingly we also host external speakers, this book offers an opportunity for us to share what we hope are innovative and effective uses of games, experiments and simulations across Aston Business School.

Increasingly, A-Game has also embraced developments in playful learning, helping us all appreciate the differences, and sometimes the blurriness, between the uses of games and simulations and playful learning in our teaching. Hence, it was natural for this book also to discuss potential uses and benefits of playful learning in higher education.

In the text that follows there are separate sections that, in turn, provide advice on how best to incorporate games, simulations and playful learning into business education. We use the term business education broadly. It encompasses the use of games, simulations and playful learning in Economics and Law, as well as in business disciplines such as Accounting, Marketing, Strategy, etc. As with the previously Edward Elgar published, edited book, Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Perspectives from a Business School, this book is written solely by Aston Business and Law School colleagues. Further, as with the previously published book, chapters are interspersed with short practical thoughts and tips on how best to incorporate games, simulations and
playful learning. This book provides an opportunity to celebrate and recognise the great quality academics, learning and teaching at Aston University.

Finally, some thanks. First, thank you to Kathy Daniels who had the original idea for Aston Business and Law School colleagues solely to write a book on how to teach in a business school. Second, and very importantly, a big thank you to Angie Daniels, who looked after the details of putting the book together, always with a smile, a joke and much patience. Finally, to Elinor, Jon and all the authors who were so generous and happy to offer to contribute to this book.