“Chicken or Egg, Course or Game”

Where to start designing your game-based learning environment?

By Dr. Meike Sauerwein
Educational Game - Definition

Game
A structured form of play for entertainment.

Educational Game
Games that are played not just for entertainment but for learning purpose as well.

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Gamification vs Serious Game

Educational Game
Games that are played not just for entertainment but for learning purpose as well.

Gamification
A process of integrating gaming elements into non-game activities to make them more appealing to the public/students.

Serious Game
A game that has a more “serious” theme and message behind the game play that is just for fun.

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Gamifying Educational Contents

Adding common gaming elements to an existing course and transforming it into a game-like learning experience

Designing a class, then make it fun?

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Life Cycle Thinking Game

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Difficulties and Tips
Gamifying the Course Content

• Does not “feel” like a game, not fun to play.
• Lack intrinsic player motivation. “Gain more points” or “Unlock more badges” do not last long.
  • Tips: Tailor-make stories to align the game mechanics.
  • Tips: Adopt elements from past successful game models.

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Difficulties and Tips 2
Gamifying the Course Content

- Complex ideas cannot be gamified properly.
  - Tips: Generalize and simplify into key learnings prior to gamification.
  - Tips: Focus on building connections (Decisions & Consequences)
  - Tips: Add Flavour Text if necessary
Difficulties and Tips 3
Gamifying the Course Content

- A Frankenstein gaming experience of **many different** elements.
  - Tips: Fight the temptation of adding more elements or patches.
  - Tips: Reduce the numbers of key learning into a few categories by grouping similar ILOs and pairing causal relationships into a loop.

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Embedding a Serious Game into Class

L.O.O.P - Life of Ordinary People

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Difficulties and Tips
When Starting from a Serious Game

- Does not “feel” like there is much to learn.
- Implicit/hidden learning messages.
  - Tips: Leave time and room for post-game discussion
  - Tips: make ‘unveiling the messages’ part of the gaming/learning experience.

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Difficulties and Tips 2
When Starting from a Serious Game

- Higher on-boarding barrier.
  - Tips: Keep the game’s Atom short (1-3 mins.) & the total play time <30 mins.
  - Tips: Staggered Tutorials, teach only the essentials to start the first game, then add in more elements as the game goes to ease the curve.

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**Difficulties and Tips 3**

When Starting from a Serious Game

- Limited key messages.
  - Tips: Determine and agree upon just a few must-have learning outcomes and some good-to-have mentions before designing the game structure.

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