



German International University
Computer Science Faculty

Generation of Gamified Web and Mobile Learning Modules

Bachelor Thesis

Author: Eyad Tamer Hassan
Supervisors: Dr. Nada Sharaf
Submission Date: 18 January, 2024

This is to certify that:

- (i) the thesis comprises only my original work toward the Bachelor Degree
- (ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used

Eyad Tamer Hassan
18 January, 2024

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Nada Sharaf for her unwavering support, encouragement, and invaluable feedback throughout my journey. Her guidance and positivity have been a constant source of motivation, and her insights have significantly contributed to my growth and success. I am deeply thankful for her mentorship and belief in my potential.

Abstract

Game design and programming are two different skills that are needed to be able to develop a game. Gamification is the processes of turning a non-gamified task into a task with game elements, and in order to achieve that the developer needs to have learned the required skills, and in the field of education gamification has proven to enhance the learning experience for the student, however the instructor would need a tool to be able to create the gamified content without the need to learn about programming or game design. The work presented introduces InstaGamae, a tool that allows the instructor to generate a game without the need of learning programming or game design and easily share the game with the students. The tool is designed to be educational and ensures gamified elements are present within the game, the game can be played through web and mobile devices to ensure maximum accessibility. The tool was tested with educators and the impressions were mainly positive towards the tool as it was seen as a tool that would ease the teaching experience and make it more engaging for the students. The work presented can improve and grow in many aspects, more quantitative testing needs to be done to ensure that the platform is useful and engaging for the students, as it was only tested on instructors.

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Motivation	1
1.2	Aim of the Study	1
1.3	Thesis Outline	2
2	Related Work	3
3	InstaGame	10
3.1	Design and Architecture	10
3.2	Game Customization System	11
3.3	Game Sharing System	14
3.4	Gameplay	14
3.5	Goal Checking System	15
4	Experiments & Results	19
4.1	Experimental Setup	19
4.2	Focus Group Session	19
4.3	Focus Group Results	20
4.4	Focus Group Session Design Changes	20
5	Conclusion	24
5.1	Future work	24
5.2	Limitations	25
	Appendix	26
	List of Figures	27
	References	29

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Motivation

The generation of games started as game developers created games for entertainment purposes. However, the idea of using games for educational purposes has been around for a long time. Educational games are designed to teach players about specific subjects, reinforce concepts, facilitate skill development, or help them understand historical events or cultures through gameplay [3]. Educational games can be used in various educational settings, such as schools, universities, and training programs, to engage students and enhance their learning experience. By combining educational content with game mechanics, educators can create interactive and engaging learning activities that motivate students to learn and retain information effectively. Developing a game is a process that requires many skills and resources, including programming knowledge, game design expertise, and multimedia content creation. This can be a significant barrier for educators who lack the technical skills or resources to create their own educational games. To address this challenge, game-based learning platforms have been developed to provide educators with the tools and resources they need to design and implement educational games in their classrooms. Gamification is a proven means of education that has been shown to improve the morale of the user through challenges, rewards, and competition.

1.2 Aim of the Study

Gamification and the incorporation of game-design elements in non-game contexts has gained considerable momentum in educational settings. The potential it has to raise student motivation, engagement, and improve academic performance has positioned it as one of the most well-known strategies among educators. By incorporating elements of points, badges, leaderboards, and challenges, gamification converts the monotony of learning into an enjoyable process that ultimately renders students proactive in learning.

The issue arises when an instructor needs to create a gamified learning experience for the students, and lacks the skills to create a game on the subject that is being taught. The instructor would need to learn game design and programming to be able to create such game, and even assuming that the instructor is specialized within the field of game design and programming, the time and effort needed to generate a game would be massive and impractical. This is where the tool presented in this paper comes in to play, the tool allows the instructor to generate a game without the need of learning programming or game design, and only needs the content that would be used within the game itself. The tool is designed to be educational and ensures gamified elements are present within the game.

1.3 Thesis Outline

the work presented in this paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the related work in the field of game-based learning and gamification in education. Chapter 3 describes the design and implementation of the proposed tool, including the system architecture, features, and functionality. Chapter 4 presents the experimental setup and results of the usability study and focus group session conducted with educators to evaluate the tool. Chapter 5 discusses the limitations of the proposed tool and the implications for future research as well as the conclusion of the study.

Chapter 2

Related Work

The fundamental ideas of gamification, its uses in educational contexts, and its prior research in the area of game-based learning are covered in this chapter. It also talks about the possible advantages and difficulties of gamification in the classroom, emphasizing the necessity for easily accessible resources that let teachers design customized gamified lessons. Gamification is the practice of integrating game-like elements into non-game settings to motivate and engage users. By incorporating features such as points, badges, leaderboards, challenges, and rewards, gamification transforms the user experience into an interactive and rewarding process that encourages participation and achievement. Gamification has been widely used in various domains, such as marketing, health, fitness, and education, to motivate users, drive behavior change, and enhance engagement. In education, gamification has gained popularity as a means of boosting student motivation, fostering engagement, and improving learning outcomes. Research has shown that gamification can enhance student performance, increase motivation, and reduce dropout rates across different educational levels and subjects [11]. For example, a study conducted by Lara-Cabrera et al. (2023) found that gamified techniques, such as awarding 3D-printed badges, can enhance academic performance and reduce dropout rates, especially in STEM programs at the higher education level [11]. Another study published in the *Journal of Educational Technology* (2022) demonstrated that gamification can increase student engagement and motivation in flipped classrooms by promoting active learning and collaboration [8]. These studies highlight the potential of gamification to transform the learning experience and create personalized and engaging learning activities that motivate students to take an active role in their education.

Game-based learning (GBL) is an educational approach that uses games to teach students about specific subjects, concepts, or skills. GBL combines educational content with game mechanics to create interactive and engaging learning experiences that motivate students to learn and retain information effectively. By incorporating elements such as challenges, rewards, competition, and feedback, GBL can enhance student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. GBL can be used in various educational settings, such as schools, universities, and training programs, to facilitate skill development, reinforce concepts, and promote active learning. For example, a literature review conducted by

Fernando et al. (2024) found that GBL can enhance student motivation through immediate feedback, clear objectives, and a sense of achievement [4]. These studies highlight the potential of GBL to transform the learning experience and create meaningful and enjoyable learning activities that extend beyond traditional teaching methods.

Gamification can be categorized into three primary types: content-based gamification, structural gamification, and game-based learning (GBL). Content-based gamification involves embedding game-like elements into existing educational content, such as quizzes, assignments, or lectures, to make learning more interactive and engaging. In contrast, structural gamification focuses on redesigning the overall learning environment by incorporating game-like mechanics, such as progress tracking, rewards, or challenges, to enhance student motivation and engagement [4].

Game-based learning (GBL) has been proven as an effective means of education and is equally as effective as traditional learning methods, as Gordillo et al. (2020) have shown [5]. Another research introduced a 3D game authoring tool for users with little to no programming knowledge using OpenAI's GPT-4, however the toolkit has not been tested by instructors or students [6]. The use of structural gamification was also used to make visualization of data more engaging and interactive, as shown by the work of Karuna et al. (2022), as the study explores using gamification elements to enhance user engagement in data collection, focusing on game design and behavioral data visualization, the study later concluded that using gamification in data collection, especially through visual and interactive methods, can significantly enhance user engagement and data quality. [14]. These studies, however, have not focused on the generation of games and were not tested on instructors.

As outlined by Fernando and Premadasa (2024), these approaches are central to understanding how gamification and GBL can be effectively employed in educating Generation Alpha. Their systematic literature review highlights how these methods influence learning outcomes by promoting active participation and fostering deeper engagement in educational settings [4]. The procedural generation of challenges and content in GBL has also been explored by Khoshkangini et al. (2021), who developed an automated system that generates personalized challenges based on player preferences, progress, and performance. This system addresses existing limitations in gamified learning environments by providing tailored experiences that cater to individual needs and learning styles [10]. Another personalized gamification system was proposed by Noor et al. (2010), which explores the automatic generation of personalized levels for platform games, which uses procedural content generation to create unique game levels based on player preferences and performance [13]. None of these systems, however, provide educators with the tools to design their own gamified learning experiences, limiting their potential impact on classroom instruction.

A number of studies have underlined the effectiveness of gamification in educational fields. For instance, the work by Lara-Cabrera et al. (2023) has shown that gamified techniques developed with 3D-printed badges had positive influences on performance but also reduced the rate of STEM program dropouts [11]. Jack et al. (2024) assessed

the efficiency of using gamification within flipped classroom learning environments and reported significant increases in students' engagement and motivation based on active learning efforts [8]. Gameification and game-based learning follow game design approaches and frameworks to create a more engaging and interactive learning experience. Fernando et al. 2024 have accentuated the role of GBL for fostering student motivation through immediate feedback, clear objectives, and a sense of accomplishment. Thus, these findings have come to demonstrate the ever-changing potential of gamification in education; they provide proof that gamification can create meaningful and engaging learning experiences beyond those possible through conventional pedagogies as proposed by Kalmpourtzis et al. 2018 [9].

The Elemental Tetrad model by Schell (2008) expresses a perspective where the core elements of game design are composed of four parts: mechanics, aesthetics, story, and technology, which is shown in figure 2.1 . This model provides a holistic view of game design processes and helps designers create engaging and immersive game experiences. In a game, the mechanics are the rules, set goals, and interactions that define how players will engage in the game. Aesthetics refers to the audiovisual elements that define the look and feel of the game. Story is the narrative or plot, if any, providing context for the player's motives. Technology refers to hardware and software used in the creation and running of the game. By considering these four elements in the game design process, designers are able to create engaging, immersive, and enjoyable games for players [12]. The Elemental Pentad later proposed by Kalmpourtzis et al. 2018 is a framework that builds on the framework of Schell and adds the element of pedagogy as shown in figure 2.2, which is the science of teaching. This model provides a comprehensive view of the game design process and helps designers create engaging and immersive game experiences that are also educational. By considering these five elements in the game design process, designers can create games that are engaging, immersive, and educational for players [9].

Personalized gamification has also emerged as an exciting area of study, in which a procedurally generated system can create tailored goals and challenges for players based on their performance. The instructors have been also a great focus of gamification studies, as they could control what is being offered to the students, however, the tools available for them are still limited. For instance, The study by Gordillo et al. (2020) introduced a game-based learning platform that allows educators to create and share educational games with their students. The platform features a library of pre-built games and educational content covering various subjects and grade levels, making it easy for teachers to implement engaging learning activities in their classrooms [5].

Reza et al. presented an automated system that automatically generated customized challenges in accordance with the preference, progress, and performance of the learners to overcome some limitations found in already developed gamified systems [10]. Setting off these remarkable benefits, on the other hand, gamification is still an evolving area of study that boasts a number of challenges yet to be overcome. Probably one important limitation is that easy-to-use tools for educators who want to create gamified learning experiences without technical training in programming or game design are still in their infancy. Most of these systems are based on expert knowledge, making it hard for instructors who can't

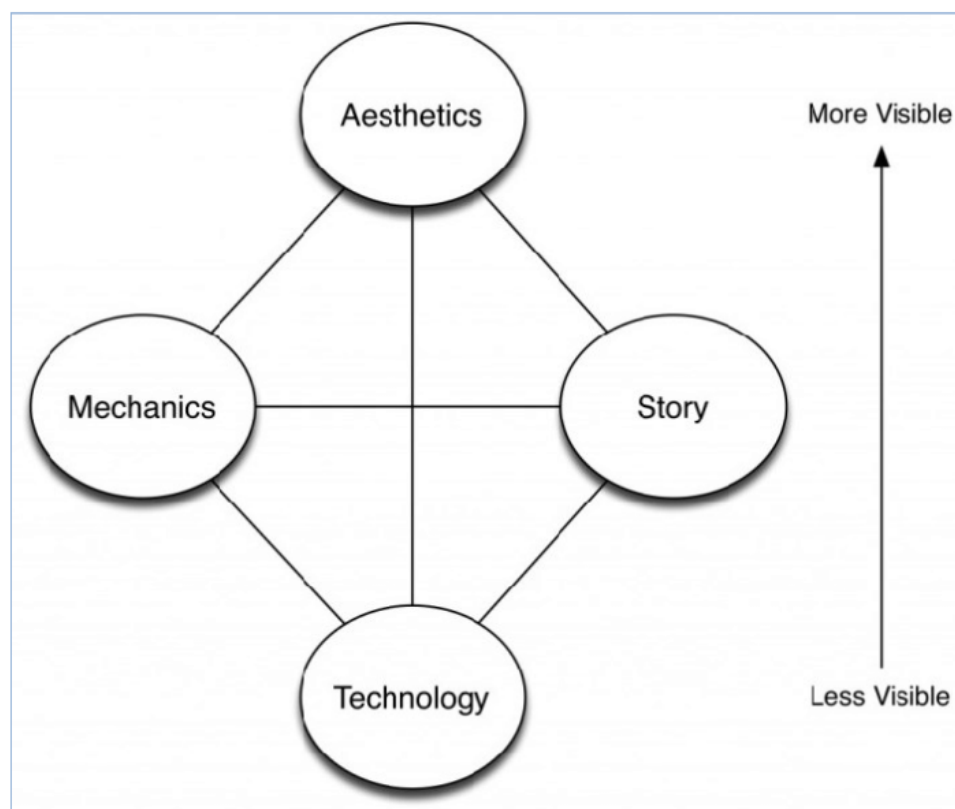


Figure 2.1: The Elemental Tetrad model by Schell (2008) [12]

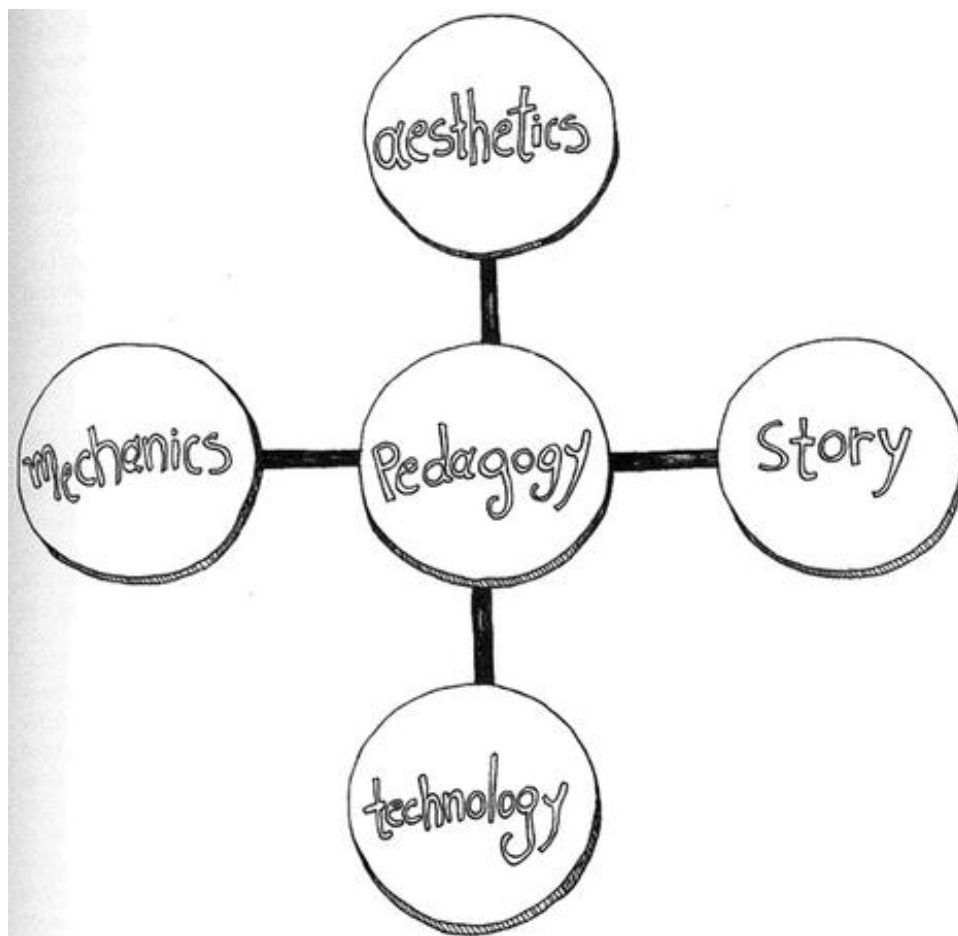


Figure 2.2: The Elemental Pentad model by Kalmpourtzis et al. 2018 [9]

afford the resources or expertise necessary to implement gamified strategies themselves. User-centered tools in this respect could realistically let more educators take advantage of gamification, with further potentials to address a wide range from personalized and active learning settings.

In *The Art of Computer Game Design*, Chris Crawford describes a game as an interactive medium where players make choices and experience the consequences of those choices. This definition is intentionally broad, encompassing various forms of games, such as board games, card games, sports, video games, and even educational games. Educational games, in particular, are designed to teach players about specific subjects, reinforce concepts, facilitate skill development, or help them understand historical events or cultures through gameplay [3].

One of the closest works related to the work presented is the study by Gordillo et al. (2020) [5], which introduces a game-based learning platform designed for educators to create and share educational games with their students. The platform features a user-friendly interface that allows educators to create their own gamified education experience by combining two elements, the game and the educational content as shown in figure 2.3. Additionally, it includes a library of pre-built games covering various subjects and grade levels, making it easy for teachers to implement engaging learning activities in their classrooms. However, while Gordillo et al.'s work primarily focuses on game-based learning with preset game templates and pre-defined educational content, that does not allow for the creation of games with custom educational content. The gameplay also lacks the ability to integrate the educational content into it, rather the educational content is presented as a question after each level of the game shown in figure 2.4. This limitation restricts the platform's potential for creating personalized learning experiences tailored to individual student needs and learning styles.

Figure 2.4: Educational game gameplay by Gordillo et al. (2020) [5]

Chapter 3

InstaGame

InstaGame is an innovative platform designed to empower educators by enabling the creation of customizable educational games. Building on existing research, InstaGame addresses key limitations found in similar tools, such as SGAME [5]. While SGAME integrates SCORM-compliant learning objects into preexisting games, it restricts game creation to predefined templates and educational fields, limiting flexibility and broader applicability. Additionally, SGAME’s language support is limited to Spanish, narrowing its accessibility for global users. InstaGame overcomes these challenges by offering a more versatile and inclusive solution that accommodates diverse educational needs, linguistic preferences, and content areas.

The work presented enables instructors to tailor games to diverse educational contexts by adapting templates to align with various curricula. Each game template excels in specific fields due to its unique mechanics and design, allowing educators to select the most suitable option for their goals. InstaGame also allows the instructor to create games from any device with an internet browser, ensuring that educators can easily integrate the platform into their teaching practices without the need to install additional software or learn complex programming languages and game design. Once the instructor generates a game, they can share it with students through multiple channels, including unique links, QR codes, and game codes, ensuring broad accessibility and seamless distribution.

3.1 Design and Architecture

The architecture of InstaGame is designed to provide seamless accessibility and scalability. Leveraging a web-based framework, the platform ensures that instructors and students can access the tool from any device with an internet browser. Figure 3.1 illustrates the system’s architecture, which integrates a robust cloud-based backend to manage and store game data.

The instructor portal is built using Next.js, a React framework known for its server-side rendering capabilities and efficient performance. Firebase, a Backend as a Service

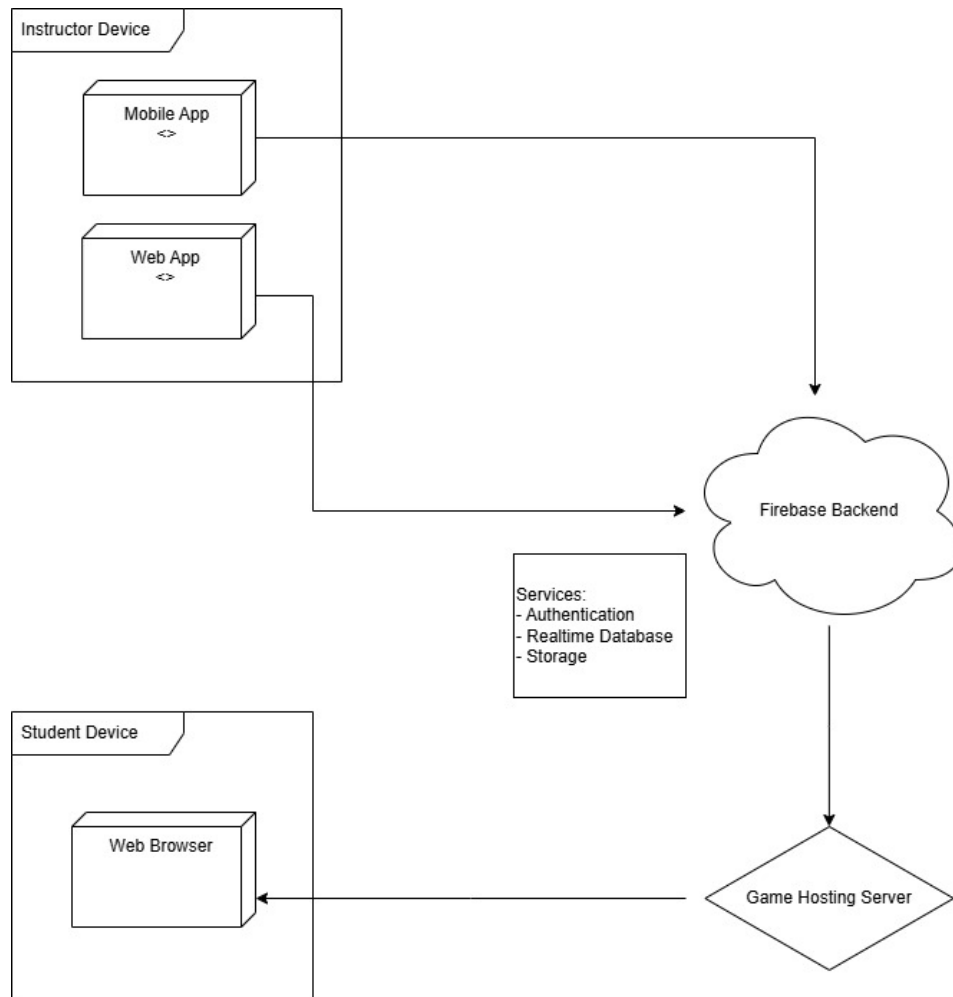


Figure 3.1: System Architecture

(BaaS) platform, is employed for real-time database management, ensuring that game data is stored and can be accessed from anywhere. A cloud storage is also used to store game assets, such as images, and Appwrite, open-source service, was adopted for storage solutions. The architecture prioritizes reliability and accessibility to support educators in generating and sharing educational games. The UI is designed to be intuitive and user-friendly, enabling instructors to navigate the platform with ease and create games that align with their teaching objectives, the use of minimalistic design and color schemes ensures that the instructor can easily navigate the platform and focus on creating a game.

3.2 Game Customization System

InstaGame's customization system is designed to provide instructors with the tools they need to tailor educational content to their specific requirements. The platform supports

The screenshot displays a web-based interface for customizing a game level. At the top, a dark blue button labeled 'My Level(s): 1' with an information icon is visible. Below it, a white card titled 'Level 1' contains three input sections: 'Dialog Text' with a placeholder 'Enter dialog text for the character', 'Extra Info' with a placeholder 'Enter extra information for the character/character's issue', and 'Upload Image' with a 'Choose File' button and 'No file chosen' text. To the left of the card is a blue button with a left arrow, and to the right is a blue button with a plus sign. At the bottom center is a dark blue 'Generate Game' button.

Figure 3.2: Game Customization System for Click-based Puzzle Game

the creation of games that encompass a wide range of educational fields and contexts, enabling instructors to design experiences that align with their teaching objectives.

For instance, the click-based puzzle game template allows instructors to upload images, define clickable regions, and input corresponding educational content such as dialogues, questions, and explanations, as shown in figure 3.2. The system's user-friendly interface ensures that instructors can easily navigate and input data. Additionally, the platform supports the creation of multiple levels, each with distinct content and objectives, enabling instructors to design comprehensive games that cater to diverse learning needs. This versatility accommodates study fields ranging from anatomy and geography to engineering and history.

Another game template, the Space Invaders-like game, enables instructors to input questions and choices, which are displayed as enemies. Players must answer questions correctly by eliminating the enemies holding the correct answers. Instructors can customize various elements, including the title text displayed at the top of the screen, whether the game requires players to convert a goal into an answer (conversion game), the characters displayed on enemies (representing the choices), the possible goals that the system can choose from, and the number of turns within the level. Notably, the number of turns must be odd to determine if the player has won or lost the level, this is calculated by the system based on the majority of correct turns that have been won, for example, if the level has 5 turns, the player must win 3 turns to win the level, or if the level has 7 turns,

The screenshot displays a game customization interface. At the top, a dark blue button reads 'My Level(s): 1' with an information icon. Below it, a white card titled 'Level 1' contains the following fields:

- Challenge Text***: A text input field with the placeholder 'e.g., Convert To Binary'.
- Conversion Game***: A dropdown menu currently showing 'Binary'. A red note below it states '*Currently only binary conversion is supported'.
- Characters***: A text input field with the placeholder '1-10 or A,B,C or a-z'.
- Challenge Goals***: A text input field with the placeholder 'Enter the possible goals: 1-10 or A,B,C or a-z'.
- Number Of Turns***: A text input field with the placeholder 'Enter an odd number of turns'.

Navigation buttons are present: a blue arrow pointing left on the left side and a blue plus sign on the right side. At the bottom of the card is a green 'Generate Game' button.

Figure 3.3: Game Customization System for Space Invaders-like Game

the player must win 4 turns to win the level.

Both templates adhere to the MDA [7] game design framework, which consists of mechanics, dynamics, and aesthetics. The mechanics are the rules and procedures that guide the player's actions, such as answering questions or clicking on images. The dynamics refer to the interactions between the player and the game, such as the feedback provided after answering a question. The aesthetics are the emotional responses elicited by the game, such as the sense of accomplishment when completing a level.

In addition to the MDA framework, the templates also align with the elemental pentad framework, which is a more comprehensive approach directed toward game-based learning (GBL). The elemental pentad, which is another framework derived from the more famous elemental tetrad [2], consists of five elements: mechanics, story, aesthetics, technology, and pedagogy [1]. The mechanics refer to the rules and procedures that guide the player's actions, such as answering questions or clicking on images, as mentioned earlier. The story represents the narrative that contextualizes the game, such as the dialogue present in the click-based puzzle game. The aesthetics refer to the emotional responses evoked by the

game [7], such as the sense of accomplishment upon completing a level, as previously noted. The technology refers to the platform used to deliver the game, such as a web browser or mobile device. The pedagogy pertains to the educational theories that inform the game design, such as constructivism or behaviorism. The templates also include content-based gamification elements, such as characters in the puzzle game and enemies in the Space Invaders-like game, which are designed to enhance player engagement and motivation, there is also structural gamification elements, such as levels and challenges, which are designed to provide a sense of progression and achievement.

By incorporating these elements, the templates provide a comprehensive learning experience that engages students while supporting educational goals. Notably, these elements are always present but are slightly altered based on the instructor's input. For example, the mechanics are determined by the instructor's questions and choices, the story is influenced by the instructor's dialogue and explanations, the aesthetics are shaped by the instructor's feedback and rewards, the technology is determined by the platform used to access the game, and the pedagogy is informed by the instructor's educational objectives.

3.3 Game Sharing System

InstaGame features a streamlined game sharing system designed to facilitate easy distribution of educational games to students. Once a game is generated, the platform generates a unique link (the view game button in figure 3.4), a QR code, and a game code, as shown in figure 3.4. These sharing options provide instructors with multiple ways to distribute the game, catering to various classroom setups and technological capabilities.

The generated link can be shared directly via email or messaging platforms, while the QR code allows students to access the game instantly using their devices. The game code serves as an additional access method, particularly useful in scenarios where students are using a shared portal or platform to enter their assigned activities. This multi-faceted sharing system ensures flexibility and convenience, enabling broad accessibility for both instructors and students. This ensures that the instructor can share the game with the students in a way that is most convenient for them, saving time and effort in the process, and incase the instructor wants save the game for future use, the game code can be used to access the game at a later time, by saving the game link or qr code, the instructor can easily access the game at a later time, without the need to generate a new game, this is particularly useful for games that are used frequently or for multiple classes.

3.4 Gameplay

InstaGame supports two game templates, a Space Invaders-like game and a click-based puzzle game, each offering unique gameplay mechanics tailored to different learning objectives.

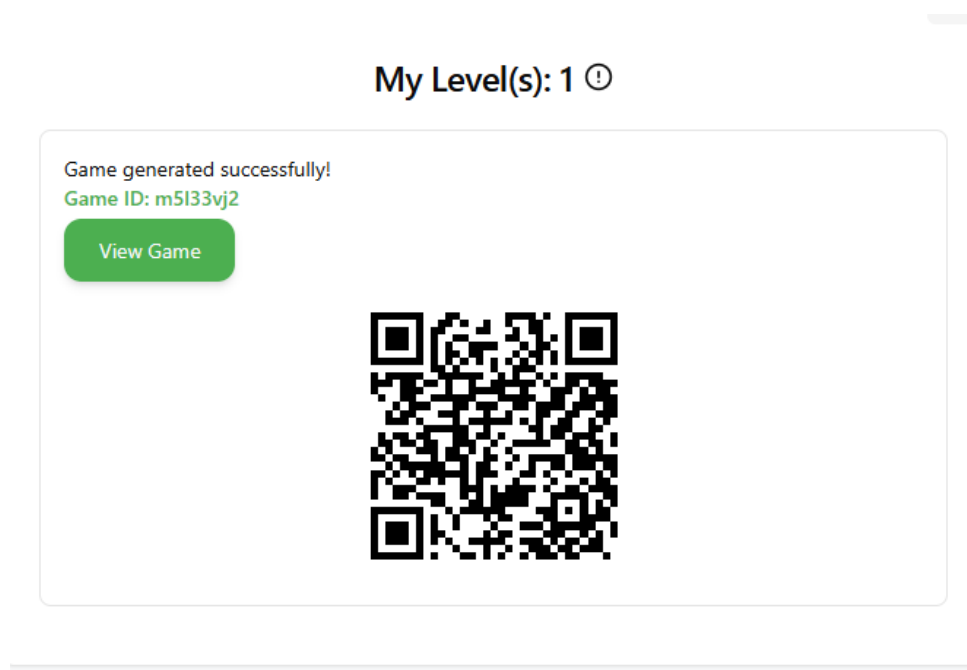


Figure 3.4: Game Sharing System

In the Space Invaders-like game, players engage in fast-paced gameplay where they must eliminate enemies before they reach the bottom of the screen or hit the player with a projectile, as shown in figure 3.5. This template is well-suited for reinforcing quick decision-making and recall in subjects like mathematics or vocabulary. The click-based puzzle game, on the other hand, offers a more relaxed experience, requiring players to solve puzzles by identifying correct answers within an image. For example, an anatomy-based game could task players with diagnosing a condition by selecting the appropriate organ, as shown in figure 3.6. This template is ideal for fostering critical thinking and visual recognition skills in subjects like biology.

3.5 Goal Checking System

The goal checking system ensures that player actions are evaluated against predefined criteria set by the instructor. This allows for accurate assessment of student performance and ensures that gameplay aligns with educational objectives. By integrating these systems, InstaGame fosters a balance between engaging gameplay and meaningful learning outcomes. This ensures that the instructor has full control over what is considered a correct answer, and the student has control over their answer, and as a foundational concept of the platform, the student's input is compared to the instructor's input to determine if the answer is correct or not. In pseudocode, the goal checking system would look like the following:

1. Initialize Goal Checking System:

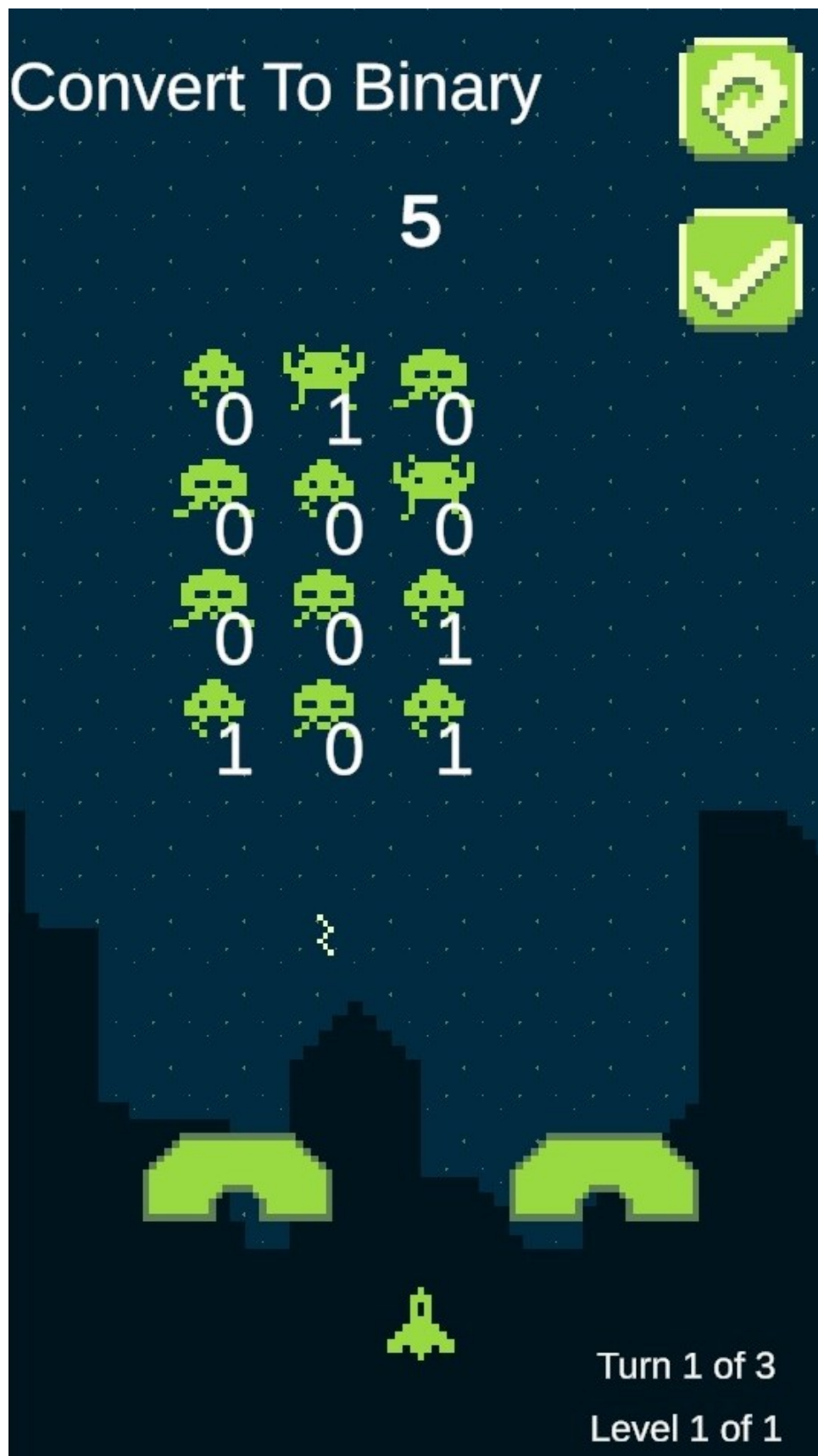


Figure 3.5: Space Invaders-like Game

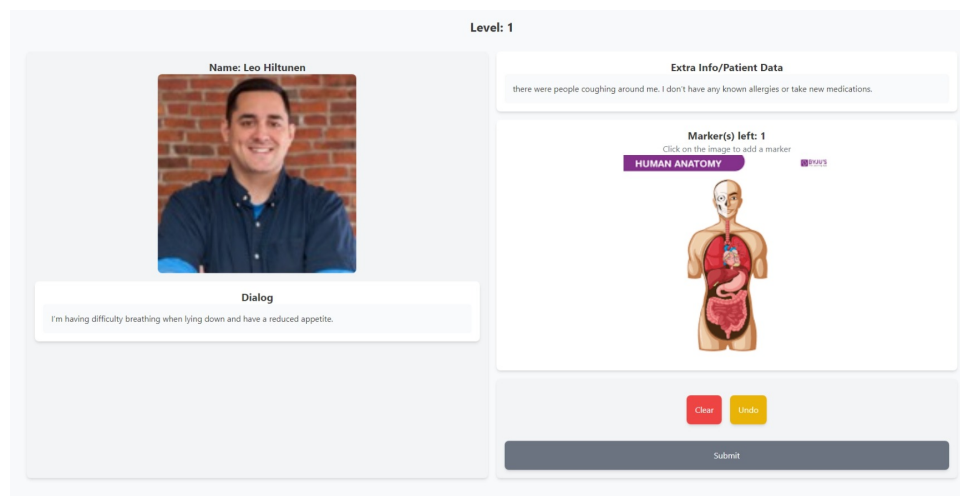


Figure 3.6: Click-based Puzzle Game

- Define 'correctAnswer' as the input provided by the instructor.
 - Define 'studentInput' as the answer submitted by the student.
2. Receive Student Input:
 - Prompt the student to submit their input.
 - Store the submitted input in 'studentInput'.
 3. Compare Student Input with Correct Answer:
 - If 'studentInput' exactly matches 'correctAnswer':
 - Trigger Winning Condition:
 - Set 'isCorrect' to 'True'.
 - Execute 'winningAction' (e.g., display success message, proceed to next level, etc.).
 - Else:
 - Trigger Losing Condition:
 - Set 'isCorrect' to 'False'.
 - Execute 'losingAction' (e.g., display failure message, allow retry, etc.).
 4. End Goal Checking System.

Example Code Implementation:

```
-----
correctAnswer = instructorInput # Input provided by the instructor
studentInput = getStudentInput() # Function to receive student's input

# Compare inputs
if studentInput == correctAnswer:
    isCorrect = True
```

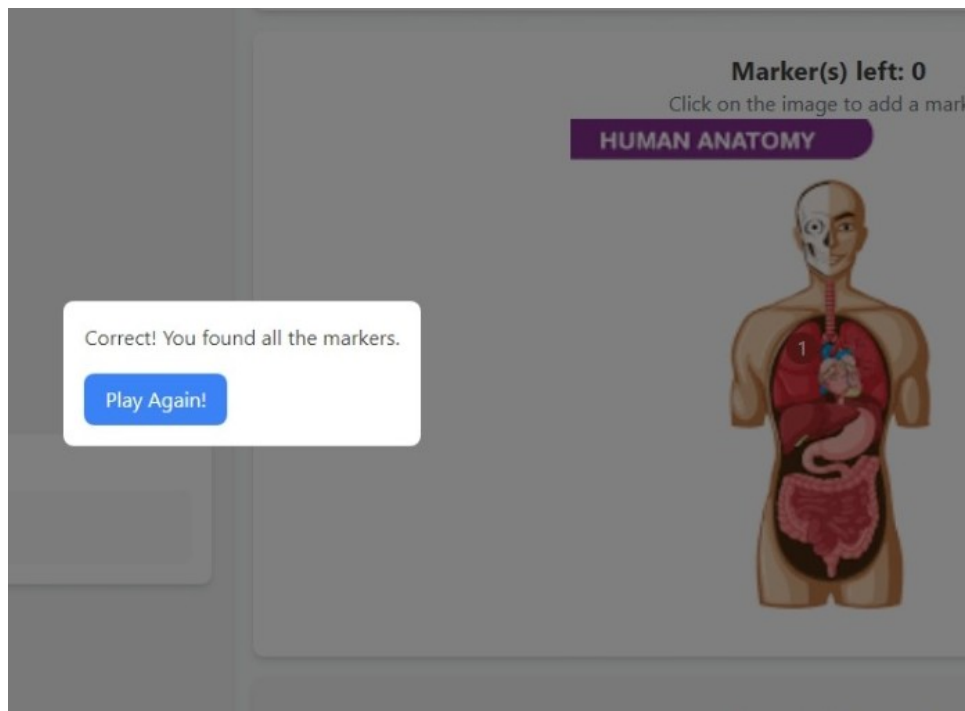


Figure 3.7: Correct Answer in Click-based Puzzle Game

```
print("Correct! You win!")
winningAction() # Execute winning action
else:
    isCorrect = False
    print("Incorrect. You lose!")
    losingAction() # Execute losing action
```

The pseudocode outlines the core functionality and concept of the goal checking system, which is essential for evaluating student responses and providing meaningful feedback, in figure 3.7 the users is met with a modal informing that the answer is correct and all the markers have been found to give the user a sense of accomplishment over the level. By implementing this system, InstaGame ensures that gameplay is aligned with educational objectives and that students receive accurate assessments of their performance. The goal checking system is a fundamental component of the platform, since the instructor needs to always add input to the game to determine a correct answer that the student needs to match, this ensures that the game is always aligned with the instructors educational objectives, this also gives the instructor a sense of control over the game.

Chapter 4

Experiments & Results

4.1 Experimental Setup

Experiments with educators were carried out to comprehend and assess the suggested tool's usefulness and efficacy. The experimental setting is described in depth in the parts that follow, along with subject recruitment, data collection techniques, assessment measures, and experiment results. The tests were divided into two stages: a usability study and a focus group session. In contrast to the usability study, which involved individual educators interacting with the platform to complete specific tasks and providing feedback via a questionnaire, the focus group session involved a group of educators who volunteered to provide feedback on the platform's features, interface, and overall usability after testing the platform.

4.2 Focus Group Session

Five teaching assistants from the German International University (GIU) with bachelor's degrees or above participated in the focus group. Volunteers from various academic departments and specialties participated, including two instructors from the Computer Science department, one from the Business department, and two from the Business Informatics department. Following a presentation and explanation of the InstaGame, attendees were asked to test out the platform and offer input on its features, usability, and possible applications in their classes. Thirty minutes were spent in the focus group. Prior to the usability assessment, the platform's functionality and design were improved based on input gathered from the focus group. Suggestions for enhancing the user interface for easier navigation and a better user experience overall were included in the feedback. The platform's potential uses in their courses and ways to improve student motivation and engagement were also discussed by the participants. One teacher assistant from the business department proposed using the tool to create a case study game in a talent acquisition setting so that students could put what they had learned in lectures into practice.

4.3 Focus Group Results

The focus group session was successful in gathering feedback from educators on the platform's features, usability, and potential applications in their courses. The participants were enthusiastic about the platform's potential to enhance student engagement and motivation. The participants also provided feedback on the platform's user interface, suggesting improvements to make it more user-friendly. The feedback was mainly constructive, with participants offering suggestions for enhancing the platform's features and usability for what they would like to see in the platform. One participant taught a UI/UX design course and suggested working on the platform's design to make it more minimalist and user-friendly. Two other participant from the Bisnuess Informatics department suggested adding a tutorial to explain how to use the platform and create games. The participants also discussed the platform's potential applications in their courses, with one participant proposing using the platform to create a case study game in a talent acquisition setting. Overall, the focus group session provided valuable feedback on the platform's features, usability, and potential applications in educational settings.

4.4 Focus Group Session Design Changes

After the focus group session, the platform's design and functionality were improved based on the feedback received from the participants. The changes were made depending on the severity and the re-occurrence of the requested changes. The change with the highest priority was a tutorial system to guide and explain how to use the platform, this request was made by all five of the participants, and as shown in figure 4.1 a hint is shown to the instructor to explain the use of the dialog input field, and in figure ?? an introduction is provided that explains the game further for the user, the tutorial system can be refered to at any time by a click of a button, and adds so much more to the comprehensiveness of the platform ensuring that the users understand how each feature can be utilized. The second most requested change was the design of the platform, the participants did not like the user-interface and suggested a more minimalistic design, this request was made by three of the participants, and the new design follows a more minimalistic black and white design to avoid distracting the user as shown in figure 4.3. The third most requested change was within the click-puzzle game template itself, and the participants pointed out that the game should reveal the correct answer in case of a wrong answer was submitted, this is to ensure that the student can learn from the mistakes that were made.

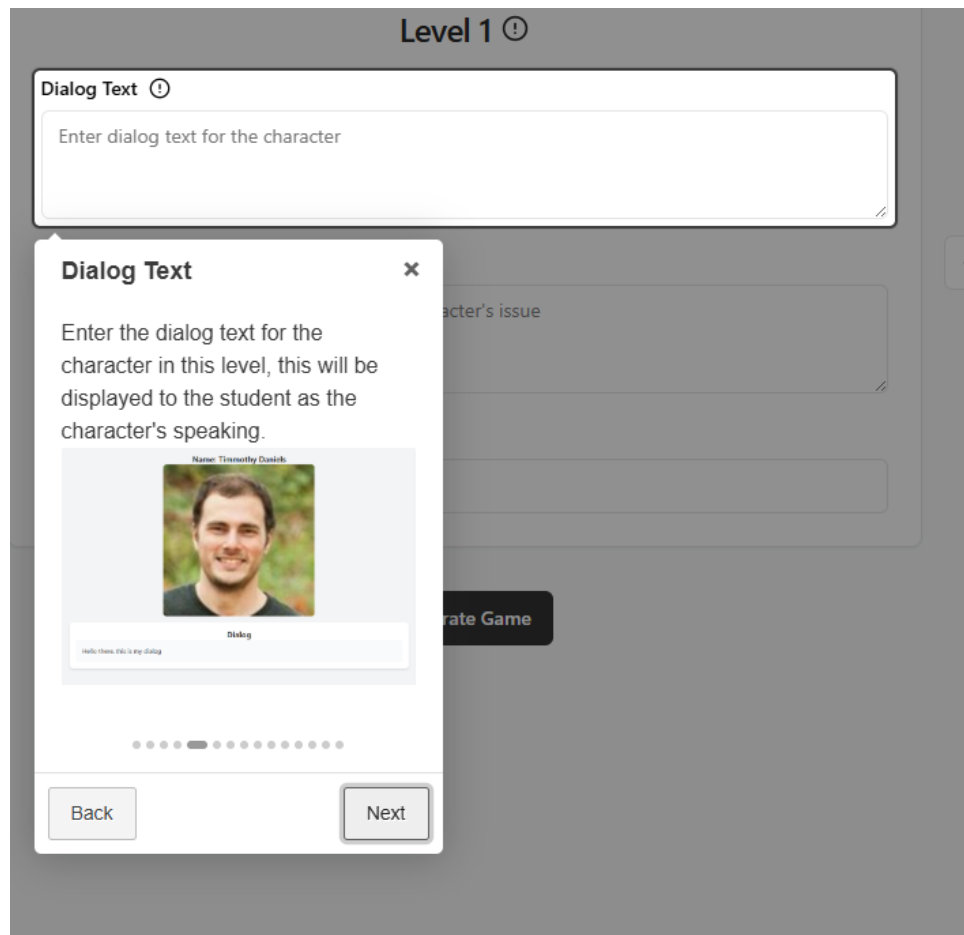


Figure 4.1: The tutorial system that was added to the platform after the focus group session.

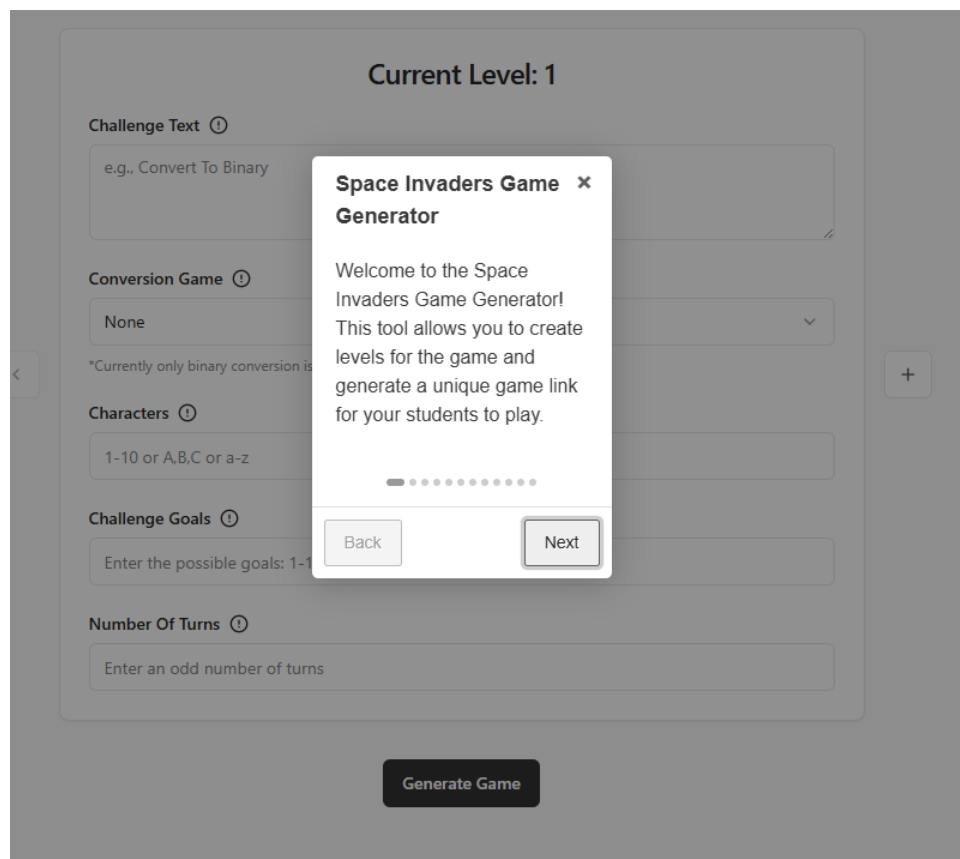
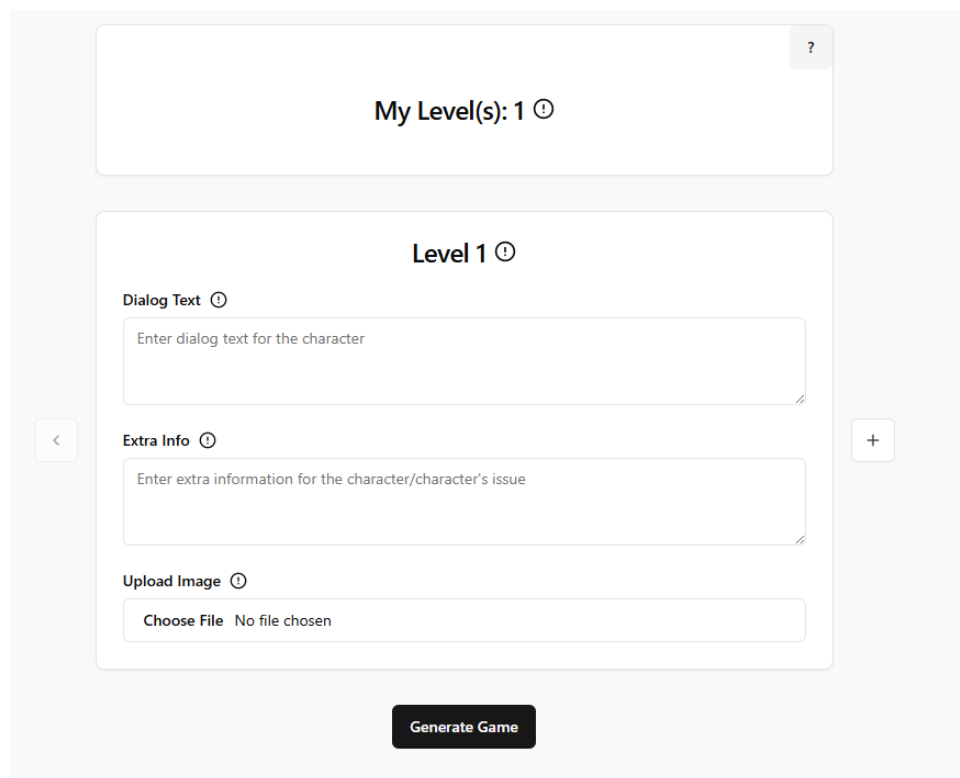


Figure 4.2: The new design of the platform after the focus group session.



The image shows a web interface for creating a game level. At the top, there is a white box with the text "My Level(s): 1" and a question mark icon. Below this is a larger white box titled "Level 1". Inside this box, there are three sections: "Dialog Text" with a text input field containing the placeholder "Enter dialog text for the character"; "Extra Info" with a text input field containing the placeholder "Enter extra information for the character/character's issue"; and "Upload Image" with a button labeled "Choose File" and the text "No file chosen". To the left of the "Level 1" box is a back arrow button, and to the right is a plus button. At the bottom center of the interface is a dark button labeled "Generate Game".

Figure 4.3: The new design of the platform after the focus group session.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

InstaGame is a means to support the instructor and the students in their educational experience and eases the search for games that matches the content that the instructor needs to teach, as the platform supports various game templates to be used in various fields, and the unneeded programming or game design experience to generate a game for the students. Also InstaGame supports being played on any browser and eases the sharing of the game through multiple means of distribution. The platform was tested with educators and the impressions were mainly positive towards the tool as it was seen as a tool that would ease the teaching experience and make it more engaging for the students.

5.1 Future work

The work presented can improve and grow in many aspects, more quantitative testing needs to be done to ensure that the platform is useful and engaging for the students, as it was only tested on instructors. More game templates that allow for more immersive experiences, and games that support co-op multiplayer to teach students more about teamwork. Future work should also consider the creative process of creating games and the game design elements. The tool presented can also be used in other fields such as corporate training, and the platform can be used to create games for team building exercises. Data collection and a dashboard for the instructors to use to analyze the students performance and engagement in the games, should be considered in future work. Accessibility should also be considered in future work, to ensure that students with disabilities can also use the platform, the unity engine supports accessibility features that can be used to make the games more accessible by remapping the controls or changing the color scheme of the game. It should be also considered to add more structural gameification features such as leaderboards, badges, and achievements to make the games more engaging for the students and keep them returning to the platform.

5.2 Limitations

The limitations of the work presented makes room for improvements and more testing of InstaGame, as the platform was only tested with five educators in a focus group setting. The platform also lacks the amount of game templates as there exists only two templates to be chosen from, and those templates contain minor bugs, but more bugs may remain undiscovered. The platform also does not show if the student has completed the task or not, and there is no any data collection for analysis that the instructors to use. Also in order to generate a game there has to exist a game template that the instructor can use, therefore the platform does not generate games from scratch. The use of structural gameification features such as leaderboards, badges, and achievements are also missing from the platform. It should be considered that the instructor is also required to have content to add to the template, and the platform does not support generating the educational content.

Appendix

List of Figures

2.1	The Elemental Tetrad model by Schell (2008) [12]	6
2.2	The Elemental Pentad model by Kalmpourtzis et al. 2018 [9]	7
2.3	Educational game creation platform by Gordillo et al. (2020) [5]	9
2.4	Educational game gameplay by Gordillo et al. (2020) [5]	9
3.1	System Architecture	11
3.2	Game Customization System for Click-based Puzzle Game	12
3.3	Game Customization System for Space Invaders-like Game	13
3.4	Game Sharing System	15
3.5	Space Invaders-like Game	16
3.6	Click-based Puzzle Game	17
3.7	Correct Answer in Click-based Puzzle Game	18
4.1	The tutorial system that was added to the platform after the focus group session.	21
4.2	The new design of the platform after the focus group session.	22
4.3	The new design of the platform after the focus group session.	23

Bibliography

- [1] Mifrah Ahmad. Categorizing game design elements into educational game design fundamentals. In Ioannis Deliyannis, editor, *Game Design and Intelligent Interaction*, chapter 1. IntechOpen, Rijeka, 2019.
- [2] Mohamad Ahyar. Analysis of game design framework through elemental tetrad. 04 2022.
- [3] Chris Crawford. *The Art of Computer Game Design*. Washington State University, 1982. Electronic version published in 1997, accessible at Washington State University Vancouver.
- [4] Pumudu Fernando and Salinda Premadasa. Use of gamification and game-based learning in educating generation alpha: A systematic literature review. *Educational Technology and Society*, 27:114–132, 04 2024.
- [5] Aldo Gordillo, Enrique Barra, and Juan Quemada. Sgame: An authoring tool to easily create educational video games by integrating scorm-compliant learning objects. *IEEE Access*, 9:126414–126430, 2021.
- [6] Florian Horn, Sabrina Vogt, and Stefan Peter Göbel. Gametulearn: An interactive educational game authoring tool for 3d environments. In Mads Haahr, Alberto Rojas-Salazar, and Stefan Göbel, editors, *Serious Games*, pages 384–390, Cham, 2023. Springer Nature Switzerland.
- [7] Robin Hunicke, Marc Leblanc, and Robert Zubek. Mda: A formal approach to game design and game research. *AAAI Workshop - Technical Report*, 1, 01 2004.
- [8] Eilidh Jack, Craig Alexander, and Elinor M. Jones. Levelling up learning: Exploring the impact of gamification in flipped classrooms. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2402.18313*, 2024.
- [9] George Kalmpourtzis. *Educational Game Design Fundamentals: A Journey to Creating Intrinsically Motivating Learning Experiences*. 07 2018.
- [10] Reza Khoshkangini, Annapaola Marconi, and Giuseppe Valetto. Automatic generation and recommendation of person-alized challenges for gamification. *User Modeling and User-Adapted Interaction*, 31, 03 2021.

- [11] Raúl Lara-Cabrera, Fernando Ortega, Edgar Talavera, and Daniel López-Fernández. Using 3d printed badges to improve student performance and reduce dropout rates in stem higher education. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2303.08939*, 2023.
- [12] Jesse Schell. *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses*. Morgan Kaufmann, Burlington, MA, 1st edition, 2008.
- [13] Noor Shaker, Georgios Yannakakis, and Julian Togelius. Towards automatic personalized content generation for platform games. 12 2010.
- [14] Karuna Yampray and Wilawan Inchamnan. A method to visualization data collection by using gamification. pages 1–4, 11 2019.