The Qualities of Games for Use in Education

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ITRI 671

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Chapter 1: Introduction

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## Project Description

A student’s learning experience is typically affected by their enjoyment of interacting with the material and their general interest in the topic material presented. As such, a student will have their own individual preferences and style of learning. Due to the rapid and prevalent development of technology, using video games as a means of teaching has been a topic of discussion.

This project aims to create an artefact in the form of a digital game and incorporate specific qualities into one level to demonstrate how a game may be used in a learning environment through the example of an “advanced game tutorial” that aims to not only act as the usual tutorial phase of the game but also to infer certain information about the game’s assorted enemy types.

## Project Contents

### Problem Description and Background

Education as it stands is still built on a system that is no longer needed in modern society. Ackoff and Greenberg (2008) explain that the current traditional methods of teaching are no longer as relevant as they once were as it is aimed to produce members of society that were likely to not question any fundamental aspects of how things operated. It is largely a system that focuses on teaching while disregarding learning as the last major stride in development in education was to industrialise it – having them operate efficiently like factories. While learning is the advancement of one’s understanding and knowledge on a given topic or subject, this can happen in the complete absence of teaching, which is the explanation of a subject from one person to another (Ackoff, 1991). The opposite of this is also true, teaching may occur with no learning.

One major flaw with this system currently is that it stifles the creativity and drive of some students as each level of education is largely the same and as such monotonous. As such, education needs some form of system to create an interest in learning for the students or risk providing only a means of teaching without individual students learning (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008). It is therefore vital to provide learners in all levels of education with engaging content or methods of delivery that they will enjoy will cause them to be more motivated to learn and look further into that specific topic (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008).

With the recent developments in technology and the fact that technology, in general, becoming more accessible, some institutions have adopted some forms of digital learning or assist traditional teaching with digital assistance. Deshpande and Huang (2011) state that the current generation of students is the first to grow up with abundant access to technology. They continue to state that, on average, these students spend almost double the time playing video games as they do reading (Deshpande & Huang, 2011).

Virvou, Katsionis and Manos (2005) echo the point that computer games are popular among individuals who are in schools and as such could provide a means to deliver content in an interesting and engaging manner. As such, the motivation behind this study is to further investigate the possibility of using video games as a means to encourage learning in teaching environments as current means of teaching may not be optimal for some individuals.



Figure 1: Example (Quest Atlantis) of an Educational Game

According to Annetta (2008), the movement for the inclusion of digital games to be used in teaching and training environments first started in 2003, two years after the field of ludology, the study of games, began to gain traction in academic literature. This initiative is what started the concept of a serious game as one that can be used in an academic sense to relay information (Annetta, 2008). After this point in time, various examples of serious games were made for purely academic study purposes and had found a very large use in simulation for use as explanation aides and medical training.

The use of games as simulations may stretch the colloquial definition of a video game but in academic terms, this is one facet of video games. Frasca (2002) cites that simulations, such as the ones discussed above, can fall into one of two categories, namely; Paidea (play) and Ludus (game). “Play” refers to the simulations that lack any defined set of rules and conditions to meet a fixed goal while “Game” refers to a simulation that has these conditions and a user can directly, according to the predetermined rules, move towards a fixed goal (Frasca, 2002).

From the abovementioned definitions and examples, there is a loose description of what a serious game typically looks like and where it can be applied. However, the qualities needed by these games to effectively relay information has not been directly explained in any one piece of literature. There is also a lack of explanation on how these qualities can be applied to a game to result in what may be described as a serious game.

## Aims and Objectives of Project

The primary aim of this study is to identify what qualities and principles can be applied to a video game to allow it to be used in a learning environment as a means to provide better engagement among certain students by providing an enjoyable delivery of information.

To effectively reach the aforementioned aim, all the following objectives will have to be met as certain objectives will benefit from the completion of others:

1. A literature study will need to be performed to gather information with a focus on:
   1. Ludology, narratology and simulation to better understand the academia cantered around this project;
   2. Other implementations of serious games and the qualities they possess;
   3. The impact and effects of games in early development as this is the main “target audience” if this project were to be implemented as well as in a more general sense;
   4. Previous attempts to integrate game use in learning.
2. Collect examples of games that employ some form of teaching:
   1. Where objective 1-ii focuses on examples already discussed in an academic sense, this objective will make use of more informal analysis

The next aim of this project is to develop an artefact that the above knowledge can be applied to which will require the following objectives:

1. Learn and understand how to use the chosen development platform and associated environments;
2. Develop a base to build other levels/scenes off of;
   1. Development of basic scripts needed.
3. Create a specific scene/level within the aforementioned artefact that specialises in delivering information through various audio-visual stimuli that incorporates the principles and qualities found.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

## Introduction

This research study aims to develop a framework of qualities or principles needed for a digital game to be used in an effective manner within an educational environment as well as whenever a game attempts to impart information in general. As such, this research study applies to any educational game and “serious games”.

This chapter will focus on available literature on several fields in an attempt to both explain the necessary background information and also perform a pseudo meta-analysis on the available literature by presenting and then discussing what has already been done and what could still be done in each respective field, if applicable.

## An Issue with Instructional Education

Education as it stands is still built on a system that is no longer needed in modern society. Ackoff and Greenberg (2008) explain that the current traditional methods of teaching are no longer as relevant as they once were as it is aimed to produce members of society that were likely to not question any fundamental aspects of how things operated. Add point talking about industrial vs information age.

It is largely a system that focuses on teaching while disregarding learning as the last major stride in development in education was to industrialise it – having them operate efficiently like factories (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2008). One major flaw with this system currently is that it stifles the creativity and drive of some students as each level of education is largely the same and as such monotonous. As such, education is in need of some form of system to create an interest in learning for the students.

## Pedagogy and Learning Theories

### What is Pedagogy

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## Gamification

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### What is Gamification

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### What can Gamification Help with

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### What Causes Gamification to Fail

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## An Approach Through Ludology

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### What is Ludology

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### Games as Simulation

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### Serious Games

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Oeibh

## Potential Issues and Effects of Game-Based Learning

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## Existing Gamified Teaching Systems and Educational Games

Iuveiuehuhf just discuss briefly all the smaller examples -quest Atlantis, Babylon, wolfs den….

## Conclusion/Summary

Damn, shit works….

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