

Theory

Here are some of the theories behind elements of gamification. Determine which of the theories are appropriate to your gamification effort and how you will implement that theory into your effort.

Theory	Description	How Will You Implement?
Scaffolding	The application of educational strategies and techniques to move a learner from his or her current level of knowledge to the next logical level. Examples include hints, checklists, clues, prompts, and parsing content into small units to aid learning.	
Self-Determination Theory	A meta-theory, basically, with three underlying elements. The first is that people are motivated when they feel they have a sense of control and are able to determine the outcome of their actions—this is called autonomy. Second, people are motivated when they feel competent. The third is that people want to feel connected to other people—this is called relatedness.	
Intrinsic Motivation	When a person is motivated by internal factors, such as wanting to partake in an activity because it provides satisfaction or taking part in an activity because it provides an opportunity to learn or for the feeling of accomplishment the activity evokes. Intrinsic motivation comes from learners mastering new content, feeling a sense of accomplishment, and having a sense of control over their own actions.	
Extrinsic Motivation	When a person is motivated to undertake an activity simply to earn a reward or to avoid punishment. Extrinsic motivation consists of the learner receiving points, earning badges and gathering trophies or other tokens for learning the content, and feeling good about the reward but not about learning.	

Theory	Description	How Will You Implement?
Distributed Learning/Spaced Practice	Distributed learning means studying a little bit of content at a time over a long period of time rather than cramming the content all at once. With distributed learning (or spaced practice), the learner receives a little bit of the content to be learned one day and then a little more the next day and a little bit more the day after that.	
Testing/Spaced Retrieval	The concept of retrieval practice (or testing) is the idea of forcing the learner to recall information they should have already learned. The more times the learner recalls information or content, the easier it is for the learner to recall it in the future. Repetition makes recall easier.	
Episodic Memory	Memories tied to strong emotions of the learner and are recalled through association with a particular time or place and tend to be vivid as they are recalled.	