Web Evaluation II

Background information

Active engagement of the student can be used to enhance learning. In the Global Change course, computer-based simulation is used to help students understand the difference between a daily weather forecast and a multi-year climate simulation. You are "visitors" to the Global Change course, and may not have a full understanding of the background for this experiment. However, you may be able to imagine how such experiments might be used in your teaching and, on that basis, evaluate the use of this technique for facilitating the learning process.

This experiment is referred to as the Pinball Simulation and is found in Learning Unit 2-1, which discusses the general predictability of climate. Background information on the Pinball Simulation is given at http://www.meteor.iastate.edu/gccourse/model/basic/images/pinball.html, and some helpful hints for running the experiment are given at

You can access the actual experiment at http://www.meteor.iastate.edu/gccourse/pinball/WeatherSim.html

If you would like to see how students in the Global Change course use the Pinball Simulation, go to http://www.meteor.iastate.edu/gccourse/model/basic/pinball/pinball_assignment.html

Students in the Global Change course use the Pinball Simulation to produce simple statistical information at the bottom of the page that results from the particular starting points and peg configurations they individually choose. (Note that students can remove or add pegs by simply moving the cursor to a peg or open space and clicking.) Each student will get different results.

Tasks for Danish Students

You are asked to play the role of student in the Global Change class and evaluate the usefulness of web-based experiments for enhancing learning. Please complete the following tasks:

1. Access the Pinball Simulation experiment and try a few simulations to learn how to use the experiment to create the statistical information at the bottom of the page.
2. Reflect on the use of meta-categories for the evolvement of the dialogue. Give your views and opinions on the use of these in terms of enhancing the quality of online collaborative learning and knowledge building.

3. Evaluate the usefulness of such web-based experiments as a technique for helping students learn. (Note: you may want to explore one or more of the experiments that the Global Change students are asked to do. See http://www.meteor.iastate.edu/gccourse/model/basic/pinball/pinball_assignment.html
4. Access the discussion pages in your portfolio and post (as a reply to the thread "Web Evaluation II") your views and opinions of the usefulness of web-based experiments as a learning tool.
5. Read the comments posted by other students and post one comment or more on the opinions expressed by another student.

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