Small Group Discussion Game
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Vrije Universiteit Brussel & MITx: 11.127x Design and Development of Games for Learning

Background
To address the need of active learning in university classrooms a game was designed during MITx: 11.127x MOOC.

Content – a set of 32 cards – was later developed for and tested in the VUB course EduChange 2015. Cards were linked to previous course learning activities, competency development reflection and application and synthesis of theory covered in the course prior playing the game.

Among other objectives, the wish to support development of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL), guided the design and development of the game.

After initial play-testing, an online tool (survey) was added as a platform for self-reflection of learners and as feedback gathering tool for lecturers.

Game Objectives
• Engage students in meaningful discussion on key topics and questions of the course
• Trigger Self-Regulated Learning
• Facilitate formative feedback for students
• Make learning in the classroom fun

Game Design Iterations

Results – tested set of 32 cards

Difficult  Challenging  Just Right  Easy

Click to view detailed results of the card perceptions.

Figure 1. Students perceptions on level of difficulty (SRL – self-evaluation) also serve as feedback for lecturer

Methods
• Design-based Implementation Research
• Observation during 1st play-testing (60’)
• Online Survey (students n=46)
• Interview (lecturer n=1)

Feedback from students
“It was really fun for me, I only noticed in the end of it that we actually talked about almost every term of this course. And the best part: we never talked about anything else irrelevant, while playing it. And without having anyone supervising us. That was the most impressive thing for me!”

Discussion
• Easy + Difficult ≠ Not Fun?
• Profile vs. Fun & Card vs. Fun & Other vs. Fun
• Customization for testing in other courses.
• Playing for diverse purposes - complex topics discussion, quiz-like items, case study, book club, reading comprehension, examination, etc.
• Effects on development of SRL strategies.
• Personalization of context distribution.
• Offering game as an OER with optional monetized access to the online tool.

Figure 10. Students response profiles

Conclusion
Intensive student engagement was observed during the time allocated to playing.

Gathered data on students perceptions of enjoyability, meaningfulness and effectiveness of the learning experience was leveraged for further iterations of the game design and deployment in other courses.

Lecturer found the feedback on students perceptions of each card and access to anonymized students profiles of significant value.

Game delivered formative feedback and trigger for self-regulated learning in the middle of the semester with no stress or workload added.

One student reported spontaneous diffusion of the innovation beyond the university.

Further play-testing and research is desirable.

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