

GAMIFICATION IN LEARNING LITERATURE

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Abstract

Today's learners are digital natives. They grew up with digital technologies. Teachers got to solve vital problems associated with the variation of the training method towards students World Educational Organization in which they have completely different learning designs and new necessities for teaching and learning. Gamification is one of the best among the tutorial approaches and techniques that increase motivation and engagement of learners. The work aims to check and present the character and edges of gamification and to produce some concepts and the way to implement it in education. This paper analyses what the effects would be of using gamification as a method of teaching English literature. The paper explores different theories of motivation as a theoretical framework for analyzing gamification and teaching literature. After an in-depth analysis of gamification, the paper links the method to the motivational theories and to teaching literature. An example is also provided of what it might look like if gamification was applied to teaching English literature. In the end, conclusions can be drawn about what the effects of gamification would be as a method of teaching. The essay will show that gamification can be a viable method of teaching promoting student motivation but cannot be claimed to necessarily be a superior method of teaching compared to other methods and even comes with certain risks.

Keywords: teaching and learning, gamification, engagement of learners, .etc

Introduction

We know that schools and colleges are a place for learning but it has long been a great goal for educators to make this learning and studying experience one of best enjoyment and fulfillment in student's life. The perfect balance between a focused presentation of new material and information for students to absorb and the most engaging way to execute this presentation has to be found every lesson again. The classic image of the unmotivated and unengaged student bored by yet another math question or unwillingly struggling through different forms of literature is unfortunately all too familiar at times. The term "gamification" has been brought up in schools as well as in colleges for motivating the students. This buzzword has been thrown around in more than the world of education over the past few

years. To clarify gamification as a method and attempt to analyze its use in education we come to focus on teaching English literature and the impact which gamification as a method on teaching English literature. This also means that the time has come to clearly define gamification. Gamification is "uses as game-based mechanics, aesthetics and game thinking to engage people, to motivate their action, promote learning, and also solve problems." (Kapp, 2012). Gamification is used to improve knowledge through game thinking, approaches and elements in a context different from the games. It improves motivation and learning in formal and informal conditions which brings up the students more attentive.

The World of Games and Gaming

As stated above gamification is the use of the game design in non-game contexts. However, the significance of that may not become fully clear without initially having a look at the world of Gaming which this concept comes from. When looking at the gaming world one would mostly look at virtual games which have become increasingly popular over the last few decades and are a part of most teenagers' everyday life. This might be games on the computer, different consoles but also simply by playing games on phones or surf platforms. For this essay, online games are however not the only relevant games as game design is as much present in virtual games as it is in board games such as monopoly or pen and paper games such as Dungeons and Dragons. To demonstrate the reach of games and the size of the gaming world this section will focus on the gaming world simply because it is easier to measure the number of people playing and the frequency with which people are playing.

Gaming is quite a common practice in the world of today and this means that game design is both attractive to people as well as familiar when applied elsewhere as is done in the process of gamification. The act of motivating and attracting people demonstrated by game designers is what can be considered the driving force behind the start of the concept of gamification. This means that an activity which normally may feel like a boring or tough task can be made to feel engaging through the application of different elements of game design. An example used by many researchers is the use of the game *Zombie Run* which is an application which helps motivate physical activity when running. The basic idea of the application is that when one goes out jogging the application adds game elements such as the collection of items along the way or a sudden attack of zombies which will make you run further and at times faster. This way distance, interval training, speed, and regularity are introduced to the activity of running which some people would otherwise shy away from doing.

Gamification in the English Literature Classroom

In an attempt to conclude whether there is space for gamification within the world of teaching literature one can look at the model refined by Guthrie and Knowles as described in the theoretical framework and see whether gamification would be able to enhance the different principles of gamification. The principles mentioned were conceptual themes, real-world

interactions, support for self-direction, using interesting texts, cognitive strategy instruction, social collaboration, and supporting students' self-expression (Guthrie & Knowles159). Starting with, for example, conceptual themes gamification can potentially help frame the theme within a specific setting or world. Games are created in a world with different elements in it; one could try to create a world which makes

- The conceptual theme clearer and which involves a setting and narrative which support the theme and helps direct the students towards the goals.
- Real-world interactions mean that elements which often are not traditionally part of the classroom are brought in or the students are even taken out of the classroom into a new environment. It may be possible to set challenges (catch X amount of butterflies with everyone together using nets) or possibly present an assignment with a narrative that allows the group to be heroes. Doing so may teacher able to connect the real world activity with the conceptual theme by creating a mission within it.
- Self-direction means that the student plays a central role in the process and this is very similar to how games put the player central and how the choices of the player can lead to different outcomes.

Highlighting how the student is allowed to choose their reading material (in a gamified classroom this could be called weapon, specialty, expertise, etc) they may have an easier time relating to the importance of their choice. Interesting texts is something which gamification may have a harder time playing a role in, whether a text is interesting or not when the student is reading it is hard to influence through a gamified situation.

The adaption of cognitive strategies can within a gamified environment potentially be made more identifiable for students. A common element within games is that specific enemies come with a special trick to defeat them. Some need to be jumped on, others pushed back, perhaps they need to be tickled, or attacked only on their legs. Often similar mobs with different looks are defeated in the same way. This part of game design can be used to help students identify the way to 'defeat' the book and then can be transferred to 'defeat' similar books or to show that some books need a different technique. It helps the students to overcome difficulties within a group as it may be clearer for the whole group how their teamwork will advance their progress.

Lastly, there is self-expression in which the students articulate their ideas. This can be difficult for some students. This can be connected to identity where students may feel more comfortable expressing themselves if it is within a role-play environment or in other ways put forward through characters. Being an epic hero may also inspire the confidence needed to speak up and present their ideas and participate in discussions.

An Example: Game Design and Literature

In the following part, we discuss an example of how gamification could be applied in teaching literature. The first thing is to create a world in which the literature will be taught. The idea is to create a narrative which involves an epic adventure which the students will

undertake and which will have them deal with different literary texts to advance progress in their adventure. This adventure should then take place in a world which the students find both adventurous and attractive. It is important to keep your audience in mind as some groups might prefer a magical land of clouds, unicorns and pet dragons where other groups prefer an old warzone with a guerilla camp from which the students go out into the jungle doing different missions.

Metaphor Boss

Once this world is established and once a narrative which allows the students to go onto different missions is made (for example an escape from the camp, or a trip to another planet with friendly unicorns) there should be different goals which the students can achieve. Within this example, these goals are presented in the form of different mini-bosses (opponents) similar to many games where the players are to defeat different bosses. In this case, each of these bosses will then have a specific ability which the students need to understand to be able to defeat it. An example could be the metaphor boss, a boss who speaks only in metaphors and idiomatic expressions and the students will study different metaphors and expressions in texts and poetry. They can then try to find out what the boss is saying and discover that he is a very hungry boss and only eats one specific type of food. When the students provide this the boss goes away. To enhance the students' ability to identify the boss it can be important to provide a picture of what the boss looks like and present it to the group at the beginning of the class. This cosmetic effect can even play a role in the gamified environment.

A Theme Boss

A theme boss could, for example, have certain visual effects which the students need to identify to find out which themes the boss represents. This could, for example, be a black-skinned boss wearing a broken slave-bond holding a protesting sign written in Afrikaans to highlight post-colonialism, protest, racism, freedom, etcetera.

Final Boss

Instead of a test, one could then make a final boss which has all of the abilities which the students have conquered to defeat the mini-bosses and to defeat the final boss the students need to apply all the tools they have gathered (the different elements they have learned). This can once again be enhanced by some sort of visible effect. In this example, the students could be asked to draw their characters or find a picture on the internet. Then when they complete one of the missions they can gain a piece of equipment such as the metaphor cloak or the theme sword. This way the students can see the progress they have made. It will also help to make their characters feel more relatable and help them feel part of the adventure that they are undertaking.

Conclusion

As this example hopefully shows it is possible to use gamification within the literary classroom in many different ways. Goals such as identifying themes and learning to deal with metaphors and idiomatic expressions as presented in the curriculum can be learned by the students while they take part in the adventure. This example also shows that a lot of planning goes into using game design in classes and requires extensive time investments.

Gamification is all about creating a narrative, an adventure, a certain feeling, challenges, chances for success and failure, social interaction, progress, and adapting to people as well as attracting them. Gamification is most likely also not the undeniable future of teaching. The method is applicable and can lead to positive results yet it comes with a lot of traps and time investment. Gamification is a good approach to create a positive modification in students' behavior and angle towards learning, to improve their motivation and engagement. The results of the modification have bilateral nature – they'll affect students' results and understanding of the tutorial content and build conditions for a good learning method.

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