

THE INTRODUCTION OF GAMIFICATION TO EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT AND ITS BENEFITS

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the impact of gamification on students' learning and discusses the merits of bringing various game elements into the classroom. Presently, this approach is widely believed that the primary goal is to boost enjoyment and engagement via capturing the interest of students and encouraging them to keep learning. Admittedly, the advancement of brand-new appliances has brought about many changes in educational context as well; therefore there is a need to blend up-to-date technologies into the learning environment so as to draw learners' attention. In this way, gamification is of utmost importance. This method also helps instructors to have their learners collaborate, involve and learn in a faster pace.

Key words:

Gamification, game elements, game-based learning, motivation, mechanics, dynamics, educational context

For a start, there are many reasons why people spend a vast amount of time on playing games including relaxation, enjoyment, competition or just satisfaction. Up to now playing games were deemed to be only detrimental and obsessive since they mostly hold an adverse effect on young minds. However, today these very games are being widely utilized in educational context in a bid to enhance learners' engagement, motivation, knowledge acquisition and problem solving skills. Most people tend to confuse gamification with game-based learning which are totally different, but game-based learning is already an outdated concept that dates back from 1970's, whereas gamification was firstly mentioned as a term in 2008. Some examples of gamification are: Foursquare, Red Critter Tracker, Crowdrise, Open Badges, and others. (SNEŽANA ŠĆEPANOVIĆ, 2015, p.2). Unlike gamification game-based learning integrates games into the learning process in order to teach something or acquire a specific goal, and the content is also aligned with the confines of the game. In contrast, gamification takes place in non-game context; hence, it does not change the existing practice of learning.

As Werbach (2014) states gamification is the process of making activities more game-like and it can be applied in any realm. Nowadays, it is often used in education as well due to many reasons. Motivation is among the important predictors of student academic achievements, which influences the effort and time a student spends engaged in learning (Linehan, Kirman, Lawson, & Chan, 2011). Indeed, with the help of gamified lessons students are more likely to attend classes, focus on meaning tasks and assist their peers. As it is known gamification does not involve creating own games or videos; instead, it lets learners play and learn something through a variety of game elements.

Moreover, gamification believers point out that in learning contexts a myriad of school-aged children play video games, which shapes their identity as both people and learners. Many teachers prefer to use reward programs in their classrooms which allow students to earn free time, school supplies or treats for finishing homework or following classroom rules. Furthermore, they are also benefited by this method as they collect data, track progress, and tailor the rules, rewards, and build a positive class. The research of Domínguez and colleagues also put forward the view that gamification can impact both emotionally and socially on students, as reward systems and competitive social mechanisms seem to be encouraging for them even though quantitative analysis suggests that the cognitive influence of gamification on students is not very significant. Besides, they provide opportunities to review and revise learning content. Thus, when students play on the platforms, they have access to academic information that can help them clarify concepts and clear

up doubts that may arise. They also make students pay much more attention to what is being taught to them, because even the laziest or lagging learners attempt to beat the others in the game and as result they gain the input as well.

Not all educators are aware enough to entail gamification in their lessons; therefore, online platforms such as Kahoot, Quizizz, Socrative, and Quizalize provide excellent options for teachers to inspire students and increase their engagement in the classroom. So far some research has been done on gamification and its effect. For instance, in their study Wang and Lieberoth (2016) enriched their research via observing the influence of game elements such as audio and points in Kahoot on students' engagement. The result shows that even though the use of audio holds positive impact on students' interaction, the combination of both audio and points gave a much greater effect as they provide positive classroom dynamics (Wang and Lieberoth, 2016).

All in all, it can be said that these game elements are of great significance as help both teachers and learners by boosting their motivation & involvement, problem solving skills, and leads to their achievements. Successful gamification in education involves introducing mechanics and elements of games strategically into lesson planning that can help guide the structure of the classroom.

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