GAME BASED LEARNING IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT

Is it feasible to create a game to support learning in the Executive Master of Science in Values-Driven Leadership (EMSVDL) program at Benedictine University, and what are the design principles that inform the development of such a game? While these relatively straight-forward questions may be easy to understand, they are not easily answered.

Keywords: Game Based Learning, Educational Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Game-based learning is an accepted and proven methodology for teaching, there is no "Values-Driven Leadership Game" currently available to fill the EMSVDL program's needs, nor is there any established theory or principles for building such a game. This study uses a design-based research methodology and a qualitative, transcendental phenomenological research approach to develop and test design concepts for eventual development into an online computer game to support the EMSVDL program. Study Structure To answer the research question, "Is a values-driven leadership educational game feasible, and what are the design principles that should inform the design of such a game?" a design-based research (DBR) was used as its core methodology, and a transcendental phenomenological approach was used to gather, analyze, and interpret the data. The overall study conformed to the basic DBR methodology Easterday et al. (2014) and specifically took advantage of DBR's allowance for nested research activities. While the Easterday et al. (2014) DBR model will be 2 discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Figure 1 adapts the Easterday et al. (2014) model to depict its use in the current study and to help the reader orient to how the model was used in the current study.

As an example of some of the research taking place from a practical perspective, Gee (2008), coming from a constructivist mindset, offered five conditions that must be present for a good game: Games must be goal-based, Experiences must be reflected upon, Immediate feedback, and an opportunity to identify alternative approaches, must be available, Players need to be able to iterate on the same, or similar, experiences so they can implement and improve their responses.

CONCLUSION

Social interaction and debriefing that allows collaboration and learning from others is an important part of game-based learning. There is no single, universal formula for making a good game; it is still much more an art than a science (McGonigal, 2011). While there are numerous game design books, articles, and tutorials available, there is no more definitive consensus about game design than there is about creating art. As Schell (2015) observes, "Game designers await their Mendeleev. At this point, we have no periodic table. We have our own patchwork of principles and rules, which, less than perfect, allows us to get the job done" (p. xl). So, while there may be no single, definitive approach to making a good game, there are numerous mechanics available with which game designers may work. Many authors have offered their own comprehensive views on good game design; in fact, a search for "game design" on Amazon.com returned over 60,000 books. From a practical perspective, Schell's

bestselling 2015 work and a variety of other works will be used to inform the design process as actual game design begins. Hunicke, LeBlanc & Zubek's (2004) mechanics, dynamics, aesthetics (MDA) model is also a useful reference for understanding and designing games.

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