

OLTD 508 - REFLECTION 2

Learning Outcome - Develop practical and technical skills in all phases of concept, development, design, implementation, etc. within mobile learning and gaming environments.

I have chosen three pieces of evidence, which were created in April of 2016, to demonstrate support for the above learning outcome from the course OLTD 508 - Mobile Learning and Gaming. These evidence pieces are part of an assembly package that was developed during the process of completing the major project for OLTD 508. The purpose of this major project was to explore an aspect of game-based learning. We were required to use self-directed research to develop an appropriate guiding question that would serve as direction through the inquiry process. We were also required to address one of the Critical Challenge Questions for the course. For this project, my partner and I chose to gamify an existing online course, Planning 10. We used the Moodle platform to create the introductory unit for this course. In this unit, we outlined how the course is laid out and introduced students to elements that they would need to be familiar with, including Google Slides and Powtoon. Finally, we set up the general idea for how the game would work in the entire course. The first evidence piece presented is an assessment of the introductory unit of the online course. This activity was created in a Google Doc, and then downloaded as a pdf, so it could be easily edited and shared. Within this assessment, we included our rationale, our game synopsis and an exploration of the critical challenge questions. I created the second evidence piece using the free online tool, PowToon. This video is part of the 'Introduction Reference Book' in the course. The third evidence piece is a collection of screen shots from the actual Moodle course.

Even though I have been working with Moodle for many years, creating the introductory unit for Planning 10 Gamified required me to think in a different way. Gamifying a course is a new concept for me, but one that I am quite enthused about. The gamification process we went through allowed me to become more familiar with the existing 'gaming' tools on the Moodle platform and also allowed me to determine their strengths and challenges, to better understand how I could use them most effectively. In addition, as I explored Jim Gee's learning principles on gaming, I realized just how powerful gamification could be. In particular, I saw the value of students being able to 'make things happen' (co-design) and how it was advantageous for students to be able to determine the direction they would like to go. I liked how students would be able to learn to use a 'smart' tool (manipulation and distributed knowledge) to feel empowered as they manipulated Google Slides or PowToon to gain control over their presentation skills. I saw the logic of presenting information in an ordered progression, going from simple to complex (well-ordered problems) so students wouldn't feel overwhelmed. Finally, it was gratifying to see how Moodle books could be used to house game tutorials so students could have the information they needed, when they needed it (information "on demand" and "just in time").

As part of this reflection, I need to ask myself an important question. How can what I experienced while developing practical and technical skills in all phases of concept, development, design, implementation, etc. within mobile learning and gaming environments, help me in my job now, to help me further develop my existing courses, and to help me create new courses that are

engaging, structured well, and supportive? To answer this question, I am able to say that by immersing myself in the gamification process, I have gained an increased appreciation for the value of the process and the result. With this activity, I saw how gamification could potentially increase student engagement and create enthusiasm for a course subject. I was also reminded of the power of instant feedback and learned how this is possible in a gamified environment. In addition, I feel that being familiar with Jim Gee's learning principles of gaming will help me to create a successful product, as we carry on and complete the full gamification of this course. When my partner and I recognized that there was a general lack of student and instructor enthusiasm for the existing Planning 10 course, we knew that we needed to make some changes. It is my hope that the game elements we have incorporated, and will continue to add as we complete Planning 10 Gamified, will provide an alternative and positive learning experience for our students, which they will find stimulating and energizing.

References

- Thominet, L. (2012). To learning principles, Composition + Videogames. Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/site/composingvideogames/home/background>
- Thorn, C. (2013, November 13). Jim Gee Principles on Gaming [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4aQAgAjTozk>