

An Analysis of Gamification in the Post-Secondary Classroom

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Abstract : Gamification has now started to take root in the post-secondary classroom. Educators have learned much about gamification to date but there is still a great deal to learn. One definition of gamification is the ability to engage post-secondary students with games that are fun and correlate to class room curriculum. There is no shortage of literature illustrating the advantages of gamification in the class room. This study is an extension of similar thought as well as an extension of a previous study where in class testing proved with the used of paired T-test that gamification did significantly improve the students' understanding of subject material. Gamification itself in the class room can range from high end computer simulated software to paper based games of which both have advantages and disadvantages. This analysis used a paper based game to highlight certain qualitative advantages of gamification. The paper based game in this analysis was inexpensive, required low preparation time for the faculty member and consumed approximately 20 minutes of class room time. Data for the study was collected through in class student feedback surveys and narrative from the faculty member moderating the game. Students were randomly selected into groups of four. Qualitative advantages identified in this analysis included: 1. Students had a chance to meet, connect and know other students. 2. Students enjoyed the gamification process given there was a sense of fun and competition. 3. The post assessment that followed the simulation game was not part of their grade calculation therefore it was an opportunity to participate in a low risk activity whereby students could subsequently self-assess their understanding of the subject material. 4. In the view of the student, content knowledge did increase after the gamification process. These qualitative advantages identified in this analysis contribute to the argument that there should be an attempt to use gamification in today's post-secondary class room. The analysis also highlighted that eighty (80) percent of the respondents believe twenty minutes devoted to the gamification process was appropriate, however twenty (20) percentage of respondents believed that rather than scheduling a gamification process and its post quiz in the last week, a review for the final exam may have been more useful. An additional study to this hopes to determine if the scheduling of the gamification had any correlation to a percentage of the students not wanting to be engaged in the process. As well, the additional study hopes to determine at what incremental level of time invested in class room gamification produce no material incremental benefits to the student as well as determine if any correlation exist between respondents preferring not to have it at the end of the semester to students not believing the gamification process added to the increase of their curricular knowledge.

Keywords : gamification, inexpensive, non-quantitative advantages, post-secondary

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