Games based learning

Redefining Engagement in eLearning
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Today, varied kinds of learning processes are being employed in classrooms. The bygone days of imparting classroom style education was considered the best medium where the student had to attend classes for every subject. At the end of the term, students were subjected to a series of tests that gauged their learning and retention levels. Time has revealed that periodical tests and exams do not test the grasp of a subject and its application completely. Conventional mediums of imparting education are being replaced with high tech tools and virtual worlds to educate students on an interactive platform. This shift has been at a steady pace.

Games have contributed majorly towards the interactive experience of the learner. Games have proved to be more engaging and interactive to the core. In a game, the learner is occupied from start to finish of the session unlike regular classroom sessions. In the age of rapid eLearning, challenges of conventional classroom based learning have been overcome by games with rapid agility.

Learning games are being used to relax learners and teach complex concepts effectively in trainings. What makes games so engaging and interactive is an oft asked question. The answer to this is simply the in-built learning design. Studies have also revealed that students get more motivated and immersed into games in comparison to other classroom activities. Game based learning is novel and an interactive approach to teaching and learning. This makes it a complete learning package for learners irrespective of their age.
Definitions

Wikipedia: “Game based learning (GBL) is a branch of serious games that deals with applications that have defined learning outcomes. Generally they are designed to balance the subject matter with the gameplay and the ability of the player to retain and apply said subject matter to the real world.”

Spitz (2011): “Connect and engage with audiences.”

So, what does "game based learning" actually mean? Game based learning is about understanding your users and creating value for them by providing a memorable journey in the game environment. For example, role-playing games enable students to experience and visually understand the world from someone else’s eyes. Online social games present real world problems and raise the awareness about these issues inside the game. Game based learning is appealing to teachers as it provides students a safe place to learn from their failures.
Game based learning concept inspires game mechanics application to things that are usually not seen as a game. In fact, it assists educators in persuading or motivating their learners to perform and understand complex to simple topics with ease in less time. Game based learning has been proven to be very powerful in engaging learner’s attention for a longer span of time. Game based learning is not only about converting things in the real world into games but also using the characteristics of game mechanics and applying them to the real world.

Game based learning allows creation of a world for the learners where they are free to analyze, plan and experience things without any difficulty. Definitely, it provides educators the means to create a representation of the lesson to be taught which is in action and naturally more edutaining unlike normal classroom lecture.

For instance, Teed (2004) suggests that there are several elements that define an activity as a game:

- **Competition**: Score-keeping element and/or winning conditions motivates players and assesses their performance. Sometimes, players are not necessarily competing against each other. Actually, a lot of games have players working as a team to overcome obstacles built into the game.

- **Engagement**: Learners get so engrossed into the game that they do not want to stop until the game is over. Researchers term this phenomenon as "intrinsic motivation" and attribute it to four sources namely; challenge, curiosity, control and fantasy.

- **Immediate Rewards**: Learners get excited when they receive victory or points. Sometimes, even simple or analytical feedback motivates them to play the game once again.

Game based learning has raised the bar when it comes to assisting the learner’s development using novel interactive mediums. In reality, the combination of instructional design and multimedia has stimulated the creation of exciting gaming environments for engaging the learners with ease. Learners can play the game multiple times for mastering it and at the same time revise the lesson taught in the game. Retention of the lesson taught is taken care of without any difficulty.
eLearning has been a backbone of today’s learning scenarios and it’s enhancement to meet learner demands is critical. A normal eLearning does not promise being engaging or interactive, which affects the motivation level of the learners. This is where games based learning takes its route to make eLearning more engaging and highly interactive.

The concept of game based learning being highly engaging blends well with the current eLearning curricula making it more interesting and fun filled. Games had an advent in eLearning since long with the use of narrations and storylines but that was not enough for a learner to engross oneself for long.

Basic difference why games based learning trends over the traditional learning:

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<th>Traditional Learning</th>
<th>Games Based Learning</th>
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<td>Cost Effective</td>
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<td>Low physical liability</td>
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<td>Standardized Assessment</td>
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<td>Highly Engaging</td>
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<td>Easy transfer of knowledge to</td>
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<td>real world environment</td>
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<td>Immediate feedback in</td>
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<td>response to mistakes</td>
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<td>Learning pace tailored to</td>
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“Our training group does quarterly satisfaction surveys for our internal customers (sales, marketing, engineering, product support etc) and our satisfaction scores have risen dramatically since we launched our learning resource site with the Raptivity games. Many folks commented specifically on the games as a fun way of transferring knowledge. This product purchase has really shown an ROI for our training team! I am flattered to be referenced as an extremely satisfied customer!”

Mary E. Coughlin
Global Clinical Services, Philips Children's Medical Ventures

Raptivity® is a first in class interactivity builder which allows an instructional designer, course developer, trainers and faculties to quickly and easily create engaging learning interactions. Raptivity offers a library of learning game interactions combining learning with fun. These games can be easily customized with no programming knowledge. Raptivity offers these games in various packs to allow users to select the games which meet their needs.

Set an enjoyable learning environment with a wide variety of game interactions

Instill the thinking power in learners with various crosswords and letter games

Impart interactive training to excite your learners with variety of game shows and strategy games

Infuse high level of interest and excitement to the learning content using games, simulations and other learning aids
Check out some interesting game samples from Raptivity

Spin the Wheel: An interactive game that can be used to assign diverse variety of questions in one assessment.

Slot Machine: It is based on the theory of positive reinforcement. It can be used to motivate the learners.

Snakes and Ladders with Questions: An exciting game with a perfect blend of fun and learning. It can be used as positive reinforcements.

Fun Crossword: A much played game; can be used to help learners recall one correct word specific to the clue.
Tic-Tac-Toe with Questions: A learner identifies with this game easily. It can be used in education as well as corporate to reinforce a learning concept.

Light and Sound Memory Game: Energize the learners with this game. It requires spontaneous reaction, so for learning content which requires due concentration, this interaction fits just perfectly well.

To know more about Raptivity games, click here...
Games based Learning in eLearning encourages self-reliance and self-determination in terms of a learner’s ability to make progress within a demanding but incrementally staged environment. Whether be it a classroom, a cafeteria, a meeting room or a training area, games have excelled in the messaging that needs to be delivered. Practically, it can be seen that the level of engagement and interactions increases with the involvement of games in a module. Game based learning also caters various human thinking element such as a competition, reward etc...

Raptivity, with its wide range of games based interactions has taken games based learning a step ahead in creating a whole new experience for the learners and trainers.

In a nutshell, gamification can be termed as the new dawn to the level of interactivity that eLearning and mLearning world is looking into.

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