Playful Learning - evaluation and development of OER Board Game Jams

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What can games do for us?

- Can challenge, inspire, and motivate

- Allow us to interact with each other in different ways

- Create a safe space where losing can be experienced away from fear.

- Provide a space for experimentation

OER Policy & University Mission

To "make a significant, sustainable socially responsible contribution to Scotland, the UK, and the world".

OER Policy: http://open.ed.ac.uk/about/

What is an OER?

An Open Educational Resource, OER, is a freely available and openly licensed digital resource.

By applying an open licence to a copyrighted work, rights holders give permission for others to copy or change their work in ways that would otherwise infringe copyright law.

For the games created in a Jam we use a CC BY 4.0 licence:

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CRC Flickr account

- The Centre for Research Collections' Flickr account is an example of an Open Educational Resource.

- It contains several hundred images from our images database

https://www.flickr.com/photos/crcedinburgh/albums
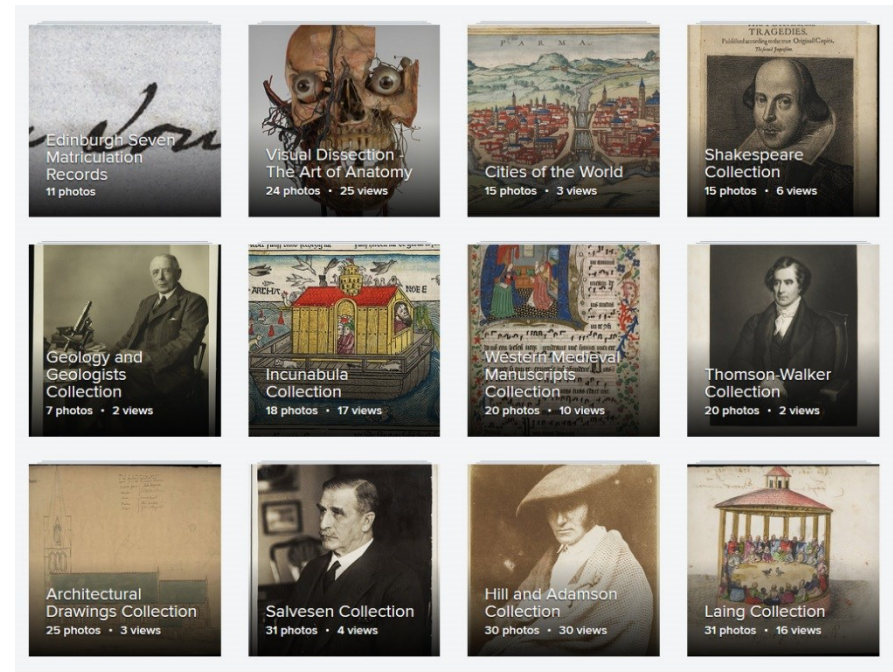
Theme and Setting

Theme – The underlying premise or set of assumptions describe what the players are doing in the game.

Setting – This can be the geographic location, time period, and/or imaginative environment where the game is taking place.

Mechanics

Select 2 mechanics from the list provided.

"These are the procedures and rules of your game...how players can and cannot try to achieve it, and what happens when they try."

Jesse Schell, *The Art of Game Design, A Book of Lenses*

End Conditions

What are the end or win conditions for your game?

What objective or purpose are your players working towards (or to avoid)?

Gameplay / Rules

Write out a basic set of rules on your game document that will guide your players through your game mechanics towards the end/win condition of your game.
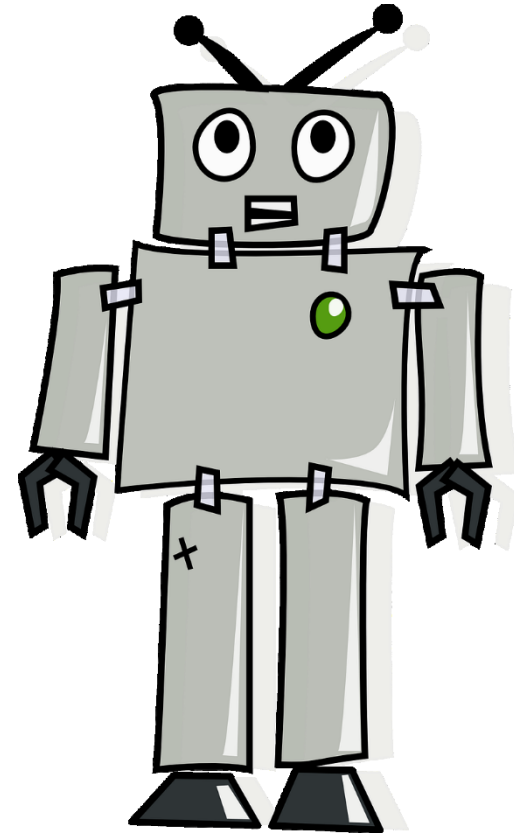
Congratulations! You made a board game!

The study

Rationale

- Sessions are receiving positive feedback, but…

- Feedback forms are limited

- We wanted to listen to the participants more closely

Goals

- Why do participants attend these events?

- What is their experience of the workshop?

- How do they apply their learning?

- What ideas do they have for improvement?

Method

5 interview groups were held between July and November 2017.

Semi-structured questions for each session, focusing on workshop experience and application.

Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Position
Andy	52	Male	Academic staff
Anna	57	Female	Support staff
Alex	33	Male	Support staff
Bob		Male	Academic staff
Beth	56	Female	Academic staff
Cara	41	Female	Support staff
Chris	27	Male	Postgraduate student
Chloe	26	Female	Academic staff
Diana	30	Female	Support staff
Dave	29	Male	Postgraduate student
Ellen		Female	Postgraduate student

Analysis

Interviews audio recorded and transcribed with help of PTAS funded assistant.

Data analysed in NVivo 11, using a mixed methods approach including Thematic Analysis to identify prominent themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Strengths and limitations

- Low number of sessions

- Participant from recent and old sessions. We could see follow-up projects in various stages of completion, and see how copyright information stays after a long time.

- A more structured follow up process would be beneficial.

Motivations to attend

Experience

- DAVE - "I mean there was something involved about licensing and referencing but my main goal I think was to have fun, play and design a game."

- ANDY: "So, I was looking forward to having the knowledge and experience of doing it."

Learning

- DIANA – "For me, I just wanted to look at different options of where we can learn. So I just wanted to explore different learning opportunities."

- DAVE: "I suppose it is another way of learning that I could incorporate into my work. Initially, I didn't think about taking away anything from that but it is an experience that might be useful to implement in some areas of teaching."

Engagement

- BOB: "We try to get people engaged, we try to get people participating and that I thought the workshop behind the experiential orientation was a good idea to develop an appreciation of what was working and was not. Like trial and error."

- CHRIS: "I was looking to do more group activities with my tutorial group and I thought it would be an interesting way to explore. I wasn't able or committed to develop a whole bard game but just sort of explore the ways you can arrange group dynamics using tools like games."

Games

- BOB: "So I was really intrigued by what constitutes a game and how to put one together. I was curious how to use it and take that forward to apply it in my lectures. So that is really why I was interested."

- CHLOE: "So the reason why I went was because I took part in a online competition, called 'I am a Scientist, get me out of here' and I won and part of that is that you get £500 to spend on public engagement activities and the thing I wanted to do was develop a board game about evolution. So I wanted to go in and learn about how you start with that because I have never done anything like that before."

Copyright

- ALEX: "I (still would) have attended that particular session because I actually use a lot creative common material in putting together our own material."

- CARA: "(...)it was an interesting way to look at the OER policy and Creative Commons. So I was recommending people to go partly because I thought the board game might be much more interesting rather than going and learning about copyright."

Summary

- Overall, most participants stated they had multiple reasons to attend, with copyright being probably the least important. The sentiment was that while it was a useful topic to learn about, it was not the main driver of attendance.

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Experiences of the session

Hands-on learning

- ALEX: "Actually forcing you to look up for every image that you will be using really worked. I think had it been just a dry session, I would have probably forgotten half of it by now."

- BOB: "It's a hand on experience. It's natural. As you go through the process, you start appreciating the challenges and you start to engage with the game building. It is an experiential orientation, I think. It is a valuable aspect rather than listen to stuff we do, stand up and teach theory."

Teamwork

- ANNA: "I met other people and the fact I had time to see their game at the end, I thought that was very useful because we were independent groups having a chat about games, and they had something completely different."

- BETH: "I had a colleague from the languages so we had a kind of common goal, but some came from a totally different angle and background and it was quite interesting, but you would need more time to integrate with the tools we had to try to get to the common frame."

Time A

- ALEX: "Have we had a little bit longer to do some cross play testing and feedback, I think that would have been the icing on the cake."

- BETH: "In that sense, the problem with the workshop was too short for the hands-on experience."

- CHRIS: "It is a hard sell because people don't have time. We would all love to spend our morning on something that looks fun."

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Time B

- ELLEN: "but what actually helped was that you had this time pressure, it forces you to make some decisions and in the end we had quite a fun game."

- DIANA : "Yeah, it was nice and quick. Just for people who wanted to do it over lunchtime. Yeah, I found that it went quite quickly but I got quite a lot from the session in terms of copyrights and playful learning. Just to get an idea of how it all works and then have the opportunity to then go away and practice it myself."

Final evaluation

- ALEX: You very much felt like you were put through different paces to deliver something by the end. And that was really good.

- CARA: "I enjoyed the whole thing. I remember I enjoyed trying to relate to different games. It was a bit outside the norm. It was definitely outside the norms of the training sessions."

- ELLEN: "it was really fun, and I think we need playful learning. And also putting it in action, not just learning about it, but actually doing it yourself. A more creative approach to doing this was very fun, but also very valuable, because you look at those things in a different light."

Summary

- Participants appreciated the active, hands on approach

- Mixed teams were a mixed blessing

- Time limits both challenging and frustrating

- Personal goals had an impact on experience

Applications and further development

Copyright use

- BOB: "I have picked up lots of images and stuff like that from the internet. And you start delving into the licensing issues, I am going to totally revise and be I have been very careful since with I have been doing. So that was extremely useful."

- DAVE: "It has become a heavy part when I search for stuff to put into PowerPoint slides. I just filter for Creative Commons License."

Copyright use

ALEX: "I can't remember the copyright at all, that was the reason why I came to the session. Whilst I think I grasped it on the day, I don't think I remember it or resonate this knowledge, but the mechanism of the game, the excitement of creating something and seeing it through from the very beginning of the concept to something you can actually play. That's something that excited me and still excites me and that's what I took from the session and not the copyrights."

Game use

- BETH: I think my icebreaker have gotten much more complex. It stopped being your name, your shoe size and the favourite of the ice-cream that you like. It is to work on things on pairs. It's not that well-developed, but it is more of a game, it is moving towards that.

- ANDY: "I took this idea and applied for the *Innovative Grant* to work with student nurses and medical students to create a game around infection control and we got some funding actually. So, I see it as a way of democratizing learning, so the end product could then be shared with other student, staff or institutions or other healthcare environments."

Ideas for future development 1

- BETH: "I would have liked to come out with more defined and practical ideas what to do."

- BOB: "I got what I wanted which was an understanding and appreciating of gaming. I got more than expected in terms of different elements. I just wish I had an opportunity where I can sit down and reflect very deeply on how I can make a better use of this."

Ideas for future development 2

- CARA: "Is there a thought to use board game jams as a vehicle for other pieces of learning? Because I don't know if it fits with other things but it might be interesting to look at board game jams based on a different kind of game. (...) I.e. today we are going to do a puzzle based game and that might lend itself to learning a different subject area."

- ANDY: "I would have liked to see some digital assets coming out of the workshop so I can go back and say, yeah I remember those guys, and that's the game they did and so I have something to refer back to if there is something I want to remember. A blog, (...) so that there is a legacy from the workshop."

Ideas for future development 3

- ANDY: "I think there could be a range of workshops from novice to experts. Starting us off with a complete blank sheet of paper to creating your own game. And then, here is the board now to create rules. Something to engage as a sequence so we can have a certificate at the end saying that we are expert coders, board game inventors or something."

Summary

- While copyright not applied consistently, games element was clearly inspiring

- Most requests and ideas focused around playful learning:
    - Opportunities to expand and reflect on early ideas
   - A more applied and subject-specific approach

Conclusion

- Heterogeneity of motivations for attendees

- Large and underestimated appetite for playful learning strategies to promote learning and engagement.

- Measuring session satisfaction is easy – but measuring whether it achieved its goals is harder, since people come in with different goals, some orthogonal to the main workshop aim.

Run your own Board Game Jam
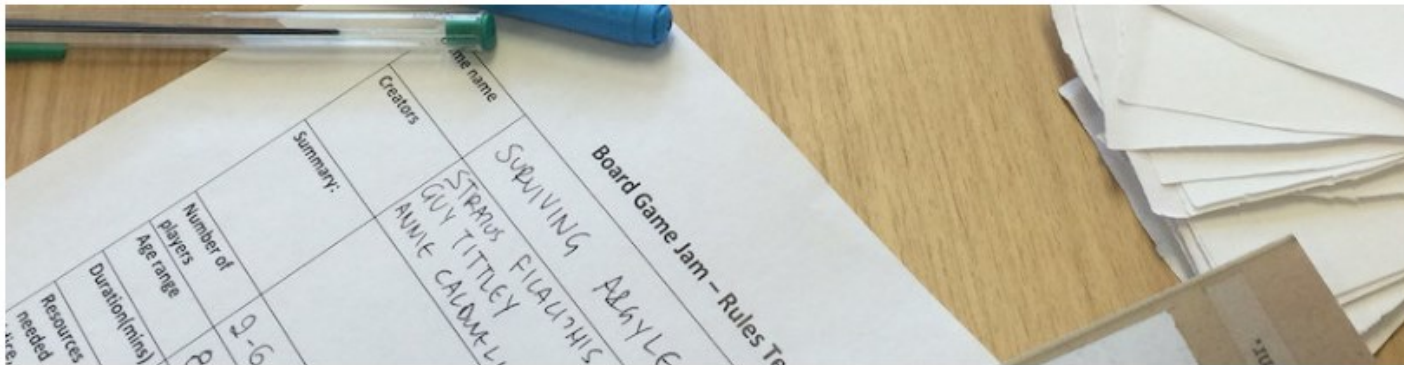
Lead a group through the creating, licensing, and sharing of a board game as an Open Educational Resource (OER) with this hands-on workshop in multiple formats, created by Stephanie (Charlie) Farley and Gavin Willshaw of Information Services.

Originally created for the University's Innovative Learning Week in 2016, Board Game Jam has been re-purposed and presented as a one day, half-day, and one hour(!) workshop.

The workshop guides groups through all the steps to create their own board game. It explores prototyping and play-testing and how to add variety and fun by employing different game mechanics.

http://open.ed.ac.uk/run-your-own-board-game-jam/

Thinking Detectives: The Alps & Climate Change
http://open.ed.ac.uk/thinking-detectives-game-the-alps-and-climate-change/

While playing learners develop Higher Order Thinking Skills, & discuss whether a fictional ski instructor, Richard Fromm, in the Bavarian Alps, should exchange his skis for bicycle wheels.

Feedback and Follow Up

http://Open.Ed.ac.uk

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