

Title: **Let's play – the value of game-based learning in Academic Development**

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Discuss the game-based learning approach used within the LTHE module of the PGCAP Programme
- Explore the benefits and challenges of game-based learning within Academic Development
- Identify opportunities for game-based learning within PgCert programmes and other Academic Development activities

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

Engaging teachers in collaborative activities will enable them to reflect, share and evaluate practices, approaches and enhance teaching. Can this be achieved through playing games and at the same time 'produce' creative and resourceful teachers? Whitton (2010, 87) states that "the rationale behind the use of alternative reality games is that the use of problem-based, experiential and collaborative activities in alternative reality games makes them ideally suited to teaching in higher education; particularly as they enable players to become involved in both playing and shaping the narrative as it emerges." Currently, games are not widely used within Academic development despite the fact that their benefits are increasingly recognised within Higher Education. There is evidence that active experimentation with game-based learning can lead to new discoveries and provide immersive, authentic and fun learning opportunities. Healthy competition and rewarding good ideas can be motivational, boost risk taking, creativity and innovation. Modelling such approaches within Academic Development is vital and will enable academics and other professionals who support learning, to discover new and exciting ways to use with their own students, through experiencing, reflecting, identifying links to own practice and theory (Swennen et al, 2008).

The presenters will provide an overview of a mixed-reality game developed and played to increase engagement, creative thinking and problem-solving within the blended Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and particularly within the core module Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (LTHE) offered to new and experienced academics and other

professionals who support learning at the University of Salford. The LTHE module aims to introduce participants to teaching and learning in HE, and is aligned with the UK PSF.

Findings from a year-long study will be shared and discussed with conference delegates, including benefits and challenges of implementing a mixed-reality game within Academic Development. A simplified version of the game will be played with conference delegates and transferability of the game in other contexts will also be explored.

Does playing games within Academic Development have an impact on wider academic practice? Play with us and find out.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

Modelling approach

The game workshop will be highly interactive and require engagement throughout. A simplified version of the developed mixed-reality game will be played.

The presenters will take the role of the game organisers. The delegates will become players and participate actively in the game. Prizes will be awarded to the winners.

Please bring with you a smartphone/tablet/digital camera - any digital tool you have and are happy to use during the session and share with other delegates.

Part 1 (20 min): Playing the “Making” game

Stage 1 (10min): Conference delegates will be asked to play in triads. If a large number of delegates attend this workshop, the game organisers will form larger groups.

A learning and teaching scenario will be given to all triads which will require collaborative problem finding and solving. All triads will be given the same scenario and have to come up with a creative intervention that has the potential to make a complex concept accessible to students. A resource bank will be provided. Delegates are encouraged to think outside the box. One person captures the thought process using still audio, images or video.

Stage 2 (10min): All triads share their creative intervention in 1min presentations and award points for each idea. The triad that collects the most points is the winner of the game and will receive a prize. Please note, in case there is a large number of delegates participating in the workshop, the group will be split into two during this stage to save time. Delegates will be asked to record each other’s presentations.

Part 2 (25min): About the mixed-reality game “Bargain Hunt”

After completion of the game the mixed-reality game developed and played within the LTHE module of the PGCAP, will be introduced. Key observations will be shared based on impact on own practice as a result of playing the game.

We will also discuss with the delegates how games can be used more (effectively) within Academic Development provision including PGCAP and similar accredited programmes as well as other Academic Development Activities.

References

Swennen, A., Lunenberg, M., & Korthagen, F. (2008) Preach what you teach! Teacher educators and congruent teaching. *Teachers and Teaching; theory and practice*, 14(5,6), pp. 531-542.

Whitton, N. (2010) *Learning with Digital Games. A Practical Guide to Engaging Students in Higher Education*, open and flexible learning series, Oxon: Routledge.