Creating a Card Deck for Your Classroom

One way to add a bit of fun to your classroom is to utilize a card deck. Card decks can operate as a form of gamification or game-based learning, increasing aspects of student autonomy and choice in the learning experience.

What is gamification and game-based learning?

While no single definition of gamification exists, the term is commonly defined as the "use of game design principles in non-game contexts" (Deterding et al., 2011). Game-based learning, on the other hand, is typically defined as a "type of game play with defined learning outcomes" (Shaffer et al., 2005).

It may help to think of gamification and game-based learning as a spectrum: adding one or several game design principles to a learning experience constitutes gamification, whereas adding so many game design principles that you've created an entire game or utilizing a pre-existing game would be an instance of game-based learning.

Key game design principles that might be considered in the gamification process include collaboration, choice and autonomy, providing information "just in time", and keeping players working at the peak of the abilities (scaffolding) (Hill & Brunvand, 2018). For a more comprehensive list, see Huang et al. (2020).

Why should I implement gamification or game-based learning?

Research has shown that gamification can be beneficial to learners, though it's important to note that gamification alone isn't sufficient. Landers (2015) proposed a Theory of Gamified Learning. This theory suggests that while gamifying the learning experience can have a beneficial impact on attitudes and behaviors such as motivation and time on task, gamification alone does not guarantee a quality learning experience.

How can I create a card deck?

Creating a card deck can be a time-consuming endeavor, so before deciding to implement a card deck, you should think carefully about whether this is the right tool for your goals. How will the inclusion of cards enhance the learning experience? If you're planning on creating a full game, how will this game provide an educational experience for students?

If you decide a card deck is right for you, you can use an application like Canva, a graphic design tool, to create the actual cards. **Note:** Canva does not automatically create accessible materials. If using Canva to create digital materials, consider consulting WMU's Instructor Accessibility Resources or an accessibility specialist.

For further assistance with gamifying your learning experiences or creating an educational game, contact WMUx's Instructional Design and Development team.

References

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