

CONVENTIONAL EDUCATIONAL BOARD GAMES

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Have you played Scrabble before? It is an example of a conventional board game which is played for educational purposes in order to test English vocabulary. It has a set of rules in which players have to start a new word at a specific place on the board. It also has a winning state to determine the winner at the end of the game. Another interesting fact about Scrabble is the players will feel challenged to create words with the alphabet tiles they have to obtain the highest score. The challenge may create fun in playing Scrabble. Thus, any conventional educational board games should not only be fun and interesting for the players, but it needs to be educational.

Aspects to be considered

To create a fun and educational board games, two aspects need to be emphasised (refer to Figure 1). The first aspect involves the design of the board itself to grab players' attention to play. The design needs to consider the challenges created in the game which are translated into the images and texts used to design the board. The second aspect is how the learning content is gamified to create the challenges or quests in a board game.

As for the learning content, there are two options to choose from: (1) structural gamification or (2) content gamification. Structural gamification applies game elements to enhance learning without altering the content. The typical games using structural gamification are quiz games using Quizizz or Kahoot! to evaluate students' learning outcomes. The examples of game elements used in Quizizz and Kahoot! are immediate feedback, leaderbord and badges. Whereas, content gamification is using game elements to alter a learning content to make the content more game-like. For example, a learning content may be arranged in completing a mission created in a game.

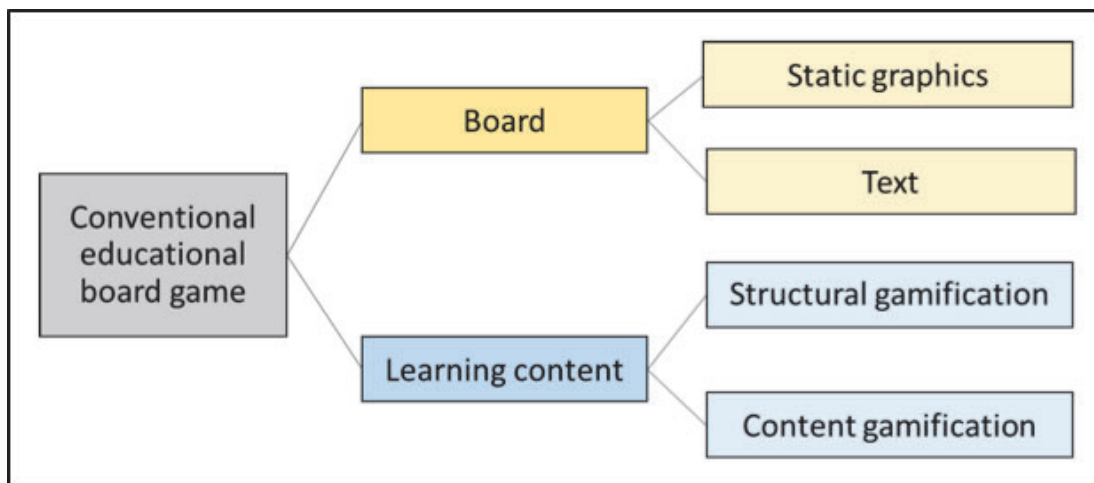


Figure 1 Two aspects of conventional educational board games

Important Elements in a board game

The first element to be considered in creating a board game is knowing the game rules. According to Fairway3games (2015), there are several things to keep in mind while creating the game rules in order to ensure that it is understandable and easy to comprehend by the players. Four important points that should be taken into consideration when creating game rules are:

- i. Short and declarative sentences should be used while creating the rules,
- ii. Diagram and pictures are used to reflect the idea of the written descriptions given,
- iii. Avoid from using jargon words,
- iv. Avoid from using passive tense.

In addition, game rules are seen to be important in making sure the games are being played fair and in proper terms.

Next, winning state is one of the highlighted elements in which it is known to be a situation or state in a game or level that indicates a specified task or objective has been completed successfully (Ludogogy, 2022). This element is important in ensuring the players are able to keep on playing the games as they found it to be more interesting as well as challenging from one level to another. Ludogogy (2022) also mentioned that scoring is seen to have a big impact on in-game performance as well as the player's interest, hence it is likely for the creator of the games to create a scoring mechanism as well as win states for the players to claim their prizes or be satisfied with the games.

Other than the two elements mentioned, immunity is one of the important elements to be considered in a board game. Immunity prevents the players from losing the game by having the privilege to be in the game. The more immunity the player get, the higher the chances to stay in the game and winning. This element encourages and motivates the player to collect the immunity as many as possible in order to win the game. Besides, immunity also exposes the player to strategise their movement and plan in the game. Undoubtedly, with immunity element presents in the game, not only the players will make use of their problem-solving skills, but also critical thinking skills.

Last but not least, the fourth important element of a board game is penalty. The player has to be cautious in playing the game in order to avoid penalty as points will be deducted from player's score in penalty challenge. This element helps the players to choose the best and wise decision while considering other aspects of the board game. As for example, in Scrabble board game, players need to plan carefully to create a word from the alphabet tiles without making any mistakes (ie. spelling) which can lead to the deduction of points or score. Hence why penalty is considered as one of the important elements in a board game as it also encourages the desire to learn.

In conclusion, these are the aspects in which need to be analysed and considered to create a fun and educational board game. It is important to think of the different aspects as well as the content of the game in designing board games to guarantee its relevance. This is also to ensure that by playing the game, it will be part of the learning process as educational board game transforms the learning process from exercises or practices to an activity while having fun.

Reference

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