



Using Game-Based Learning to Increase Students' Participation in Classroom

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استعمال الألعاب في عملية التعلم لزيادة مشاركة الطلاب داخل الفصل الدراسي

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المخلص:

التعلم القائم على الألعاب استراتيجية يستخدمها المعلمون لتشجيع الطلاب على المشاركة في الأنشطة الصفية، وهي طريقة لتنمية قدرات المتعلمين لتحقيق نجاح أكبر في عملية التعلم. وقد أشار بعض الباحثين إلى أن خوف الطلاب وعزوفهم عن التعلم يتأثران بشكل كبير باستراتيجيات التدريس التقليدية التي يستخدمها المعلمون خلال الأنشطة الصفية. علاوة على ذلك، قد لا يكون الطلاب متحمسين لأنهم يفتقرون إلى الرغبة في إنجاز المهام، وقد يجدون أنشطة التعلم غير ممتعة. لذلك، يمكن التغلب على العديد من هذه التحديات بالتحول نحو أساليب تدريس غير تقليدية تشجع الطلاب على المشاركة في الأنشطة في داخل الفصل وبحسب العديد من الباحثين استعمال التعلم القائم على الألعاب من الممكن ان يساعد في تعزيز حماس الطلاب للتعلم من خلال تطبيق استراتيجيات التعلم النشط، مثل استخدام الأنشطة التفاعلية التي تحتوي على ألعاب والتي تخلق بيئة تعليمية ايجابية.

وبمعنى آخر عندما ينخرط الطلاب في هذه الأنشطة فان ذلك يساعد علي تنمية التفكير النقدي من خلال التعلم القائم على الألعاب، وبذلك يصبحون المشاركون الرئيسيين في عملية التعلم. لذا، تُعدّ الألعاب التعليمية من أنجح أساليب التعلم النشط، إذ تُسهم بشكل كبير في إثراء تجربة التعلم وزيادة التحصيل العلمي. وتُسلط هذه المقالة الضوء على مزايا استخدام التعلم القائم على الألعاب لتشجيع الطلاب على التحفيز والمشاركة في عملية التعلم وتدعو الي اصلاح المناهج الدراسية بدمج واستعمال الألعاب المُحفزة التي تزيد من دافعية الطلاب وانخراطهم ومشاركتهم في الأنشطة والتفاعل في داخل الفصل الدراسي.

الكلمات الدالة: استعمال الالعاب في عملية التعلم ؛ تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية تحفيز الطلاب بدمج الالعاب؛ طرق تعلم غير تقليدية؛ مشاركة الطلاب.

Abstract

Game-based learning is a strategy used by teachers to encourage students engages in classroom activities. It is a method for developing learners' abilities to become more successful in the learning process. It has been argued by many researchers that students' fear

and reluctance to learn are greatly impacted by the traditional teaching strategies used by teachers during classroom activities. Furthermore, students may not be motivated because they lack the desire to complete a task and may find learning activities unpleasant. Therefore, many of these challenges can be resolved by shifting toward non-traditional teaching approaches which encourage students to engage and participate. According to many researchers Kapp, (2012); Deterding et al. (2011) it is possible to boost students' enthusiasm in learning by implementing active learning strategies such as using games activities.

This article shed lights on the advantages of using game-based learning to encourage students be motivated and take part in the learning process. It suggests the need to integrate gamification more systematically into the curriculum to support pedagogical goals and help students' participation.

Keywords: Game-based learning; English language teaching; integrating games; non-traditional approaches; student's participation.

1. Introduction

Game-based learning refers to an educational method which makes use of games as tools to improve student engagement and speed up the learning process. This method is emphasized by sociocultural learning theories, which emphasize the value of community, cultural context, and learning resources (Harmer, 2001). Game-based learning is a strategy used by teachers to encourage students engages in classroom activities. It is a method for developing learners' abilities to become more successful in the learning process. It has been argued by Cook, (2001) that students' fear and reluctance to learn are greatly impacted by the traditional teaching strategies used by teachers during classroom activities. Furthermore, students may not be motivated because they lack the desire to complete a task and may find learning activities unpleasant. Therefore, many of these challenges can be resolved by shifting toward non-traditional teaching approaches which encourage students to engage and participate. According to Harmer (2001) it is possible to boost students' enthusiasm in learning by implementing active learning strategies such as using games activities.

In other words, when students engage in completing tasks and exercise critical thinking through using game based learning, they become the primary participants in the learning process. Thus, educational games are one of the most successful methods of active learning, as they can greatly help increase the learning experience and reduce misconceptions. It can be said that game-based learning approach is considered a key strategy for raising students' motivation and interest. One of the successful active learning strategies is role-playing. When students assume various assigned roles and actively engage in the action, they become used to learn how to respond successfully and feel confident to involve in the classroom activities.

The idea behind game-based learning is to encourage students to participate in more active classroom learning. Games are an excellent approach to promote a mastery mindset rather than a focus on grades since they force children to solve problems and employ the interpersonal abilities that they will need as adults (Chen et al. 2016). Accordingly, in a game-based learning environment, students choose actions and experiment to complete activities that lead them to a specified goal (learning objective). Students can earn awards and experience points, similar to those in their favorite video games, as they accomplish specific goals or make progress.

Researchers such as Harmer, and Brown (2001) argued that teacher's role is significant as game-based learning isn't entirely student-centered because teachers provide a noteworthy amount of the planning and content creation. In a gamified setting, however, the student remains at the center, working at their own pace and making their own decisions with the teacher's scaffolding to achieve the learning objectives. In their review of gamification in language teaching, Johnson, (2008); Chen, et al. (2016) highlight increased interaction and engagement among students as constant outcomes across a range of gamified involvements. They added that language games and gamified activities reshape patterns of participation in ways that align with sociocultural principles.

2. Active Learning Techniques

Active learning is a student-centered learning approach that directly involves the learner in the process of teaching and learning. According to Avis et al. (2010) activities that entail language mediation or teacher-student negotiating give students the chance to utilize the language they are familiar with in real-life situations. As a result students become engaged and active as well as motivated to practice the language with the help of the teachers. There is a need to implement more efficient active learning technology. It can be argued that one of the most effective ways to increase learning and decrease misconceptions is through educational games, which can greatly enhance the learning experience (Cook, 2001).

Adopting game-based learning typically means including entire games into the curriculum, which can provide more immersive and richer experiences and may also necessitate a significant investment of time, money, and alignment work. By being aware of the advantages of using game activities, teachers can choose methods that best suit their objectives, limitations, and students' requirements (Harmer, 2001). Scholars like Tsui (2003) emphasize that using cooperative learning can be a useful strategy for fostering students' independence as learners. This viewpoint is connected to the idea of student-centered learning, which views students as capable of taking charge of their own learning.

Another related idea that help students to engage and be an active learners is gameful design, which is a more general concept that focuses on developing experiences that have the feel of a game by encouraging behavioral characteristics like challenge, curiosity, exploration, and a sense of development, and its aim is creating game-like experiences by structuring and framing activities Tsui, 2003). In line with this view, Hashim et al. (2019) claimed that the precise arrangement of game components is essential to maintaining student engagement. Thus, in order to optimize educational value, gamified activities need to be incorporated into a more comprehensive teaching approach, including instant feedback to stimulate critical thinking and clarify difficult ideas.

3. Benefits of Game-Based Learning Activities

Games are considered among the best methods for active learning and have been used in education to help students increase their performance. Nevertheless, their use is still restricted, and they are hardly used in all educational system in Libyan context. Additionally, there hasn't been enough research of teachers and students' views in this particular field. The most common approach in research on game-based learning is creating a game application and evaluating it in a

classroom. The effectiveness of the game-based learning strategy is usually validated by dividing participants into two groups and comparing their outcomes using a questionnaire survey or quiz.

Kapp (2012) claimed that, gamification is viewed as a valuable teaching method that enhances social and cognitive learning outcomes. He added that the widespread agreement that gamification boosts student motivation and makes learning more fun illustrates how game-based components can produce dynamic and attractive learning environments. According to Kapp (2012) there are two steps in the process by which the game-based learning approach facilitates learning: In the first place, games can encourage students to integrate information from other fields and apply it to decision-making; in the second place, students can experiment with how game results vary depending on their choices and decisions. Additionally, it enables students to talk about moves relevant to the game and interact with other players; this enhances coordination and, consequently, social connection abilities. Thus, learning and educational outcomes can be significantly enhanced by the use of games in the classroom.

Aldabbus (2008) examined language games in Libyan EFL primary schools and discovered that they improved oral practice and interaction, fostering a more communicative classroom atmosphere and encouraging students to speak English more often (p. 157). This implies that gamified activities can encourage active learning, peer interaction, and teamwork—all of which are critical for creating meaningful knowledge. Further, the outcomes of this study indicated that students achieved much higher learning outcomes than before. Harmer,(2001) highlights the fact that interactive games improve student participation in English language classes, but that their educational usefulness is mostly dependent on careful class management. Therefore teachers are advised to plan various game based activities where students feel motivated and encouraged to involve in classroom activities.

4. Learning Theories

One of the most significant elements influencing the teaching and learning process is thought to be learning theories. Nonetheless, there is still disagreement on a specific theory of learning and its function in language acquisition. Though, there are many theories regarding learning, yet, the sociocultural learning theories are the most helpful in comprehending game-based learning. These learning theories place a strong emphasis on the functions that tools and communities play in the learning process. This body of knowledge, which has its roots in the work of Lev Vygotsky in the early twentieth century, has focused on the role of peers and adults in learning, as well as the influence of cultural context on learning, and the significance of play in intellectual growth (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Accordingly, the zone of proximal development (ZDP) is one of Vygotsky's most persistent concepts. The ZDP is claimed to include cognitive tasks that a learner can do with the help of others but cannot complete on his own.

In recent years, Language learning has been impacted by the socio-cultural approach, which deals with social contact and holds that conversation is the most important factor in knowledge growth and learning. Students are encouraged to engage with their peers and teachers in the classroom and participate in the learning process. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a central concept in Vygotsky's framework which defined by Vygotsky as the gap between the level of expected development as assessed by problem solving with the help of more experienced peers or under the guidance of an adult, and the actual developmental level as assessed by solving problems on one's own (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). This framework can be achieved through

gamified EFL exercises that incorporate social support and assistance. Research from EFL/ESL classrooms indicates that gamified activities and language games impact participation patterns in ways consistent with sociocultural norms (Harmer, 2001; Cook,2001). Additionally, playing games might encourage learners to communicate more, work together to solve problems, and support one another.

One other theory that impacted teaching and learning for many years is behaviorisms. According to their theory, learning occurs when students gain knowledge about the natural world, which teachers then impart to them in the classroom. Imitating and repeating the same framework helps students learn the material (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Therefore, in this case students are viewed as passive receptive learners whose minds are occupied with language grammar rules, and learning occurs when they are given the chance to practice responding correctly to a probable stimulus.

When it comes to language, behaviorism theory has been criticized because it assumes that learning a language should be primarily focused on mastering its structure and rules rather than on how to apply that knowledge in social contexts and when interacting with other people. Many aspects of games are interpreted from a behavioral perspective as ways to control contingencies and encourage behavior. In-game rewards can all serve as constructive reinforcement for desired behaviors including accuracy, perseverance, and involvement. According to Kapp (2012), plans for reinforcement can be incorporated into gamified systems to maintain user interest over time. For instance, additional rewards can be given for repeated correct responses or consistent effort.

In conclusion, we can point out that educational learning theorists and researchers do view game based-learning approach as a tool that helps in creating constructive environment where students feel confident to engage in teaching and learning process (Mitchell & Myles, 2004) Further, it can be said that since students were compelled to use technology during the COVID-19 epidemic, support for game-based learning grew even more. Educational video games were welcomed as an additional learning resource in an uncertain educational environment (Kapp, 2012).

5. Factors Affecting Using Game-Based Learning

Though, according to many researchers such as Guskey, (2002), Harmer, (2001) implementing game activities encourage students to collaborate in groups and motivate them to participate in class activities and be active learners, yet, teachers might encounter various difficulties when they intend to do so. Throughout the teaching and learning process, numerous psychological and social factors that could be crucial to students' success or failure were identified by education and psychology research. Some of these elements include the classroom setting, learning environment, and, class size, along with numerous other social and developmental aspects.

In this section two of the above mentioned factors will be dealt with in more detail. One of the most prominent challenges identified is the learning environment. According to Brown, (2001) one of the elements that could significantly impact students' motivation to learn and study is the school atmosphere. Students might be inspired to be active learners if teachers create a supportive and constructive environment as it is the setting where students feel safe and eager to participate in their education. So, the learning environment should be pleasant and enjoyable for students in order to increase the effectiveness of the learning process and teachers are required to “provide

the kind of warm, embracing climate that encourages students” (ibid, p. 269) to engage and participate in the learning process.

Numerous studies Ali, (2008); Orafi & Borg, (2009); demonstrate a connection between educational outcomes and class size. A class's size can have a variety of effects on the teaching and learning process. For instance, it could have an impact on how students collaborate or communicate with the instructor and one another during class activities. As a result, it could increase the challenges teachers have while attempting to support learners and employ game-based learning activities.

Consequently, students may find it difficult to establish a social environment in these classrooms, and teachers may find it demanding to keep students interacting so that they can participate in class activities.

6. Conclusion

This discussion leads to the conclusion that there is ongoing debate on the importance of using game activities as indicators of learning progress. Accordingly, research indicates that the most successful gamified tools are those that adjust routes to learning and use game structure to maintain interest, as well as offer clear feedback Brown, (2001). It can be argued that a variety of factors can influence the process of teaching and learning and it is the teacher’s responsibility to help students improve their performance. In addition to serving as a main element inside the classroom, teachers also need to apply various activities and strategies in order to encourage students to take part in the learning process. Furthermore creating comfortable environment in which students feel at ease enough to participate in the foreign language activities is a necessary strategy that needs to be established.

It can be highlighted that as a result of the above discussion, it is hoped that the integration of game-based learning with instructional techniques to create engaging and dynamic learning will increase students' interest and motivation in learning. Using games as learning tools while interacting with each other is important as technology advancements are unavoidable for all aspects of life since they had an impact on the educational systems. Thus, using innovative strategies to facilitate learning is a wise decision since it offers a variety of options and ways to acquire education (Chen et al. 2016).

Guskey, (2002). stated that students learn more and develop their cognitive problem-solving skills when they participate in interactive learning sessions. By integrating many skills into the learning process, game-based learning is seen to have the potential to boost student engagement. Therefore, the goal of game-based learning is to use games to balance learning with theoretical content. According to Chen et al. (2016), game-based learning enables students to investigate challenging learning contexts, ideas, and specific learning objectives. Because of this circumstance, academics are motivated to examine the efficacy and efficiency of games as a teaching tool for students and others.

Game-Based Learning includes both the possibility of unstructured learning through play and formal learning sessions. Despite the potential of games to inspire students and offer real-world experiences, there are obstacles to their incorporation into public educational settings due to ethical, cultural, and technical difficulties.

In conclusion, the games used in a classroom must be properly designed and implemented in order for game-based learning to have the desired impact. Selecting appropriate games that teach students the right concepts is the teacher's job; for example, games used to assist students in solving problems must be accurate and teachers must select simple, easy-to-follow games in order for game-based learning to have the desired learning effects (Kapp, 2012).

7. Recommendations

This study focused on the perceived benefits of gamification, its pedagogical impact, and the challenges teachers face during its implementation. Teachers thought that gamification had a positive pedagogical influence by encouraging student-centered learning, creativity, and classroom engagement. However, its impacts on classroom management and higher-order thinking skills which (enables moving beyond rote memorization and basic recall and aids learners to apply, analyze, evaluate, and create using existing knowledge to solve complex, real-world problems) were less consistent and varied depending on the teaching environment, class size, and lesson design. This suggests that gamification is most effective when it is carefully thought out and aligned with educational objectives.

It can be said that although many teachers lack formal training in gamification-based education, it is noticeable that teachers feel comfortable utilizing simple digital tools. This emphasizes the necessity of focused professional development and hands-on training to assist educators in creating and executing successful gamified lessons. Additionally, it was discovered that peer cooperation and school support are crucial in promoting the use of gamification, even though different schools have different access to resources.

This article offers teachers specialized professional development and training programs centered on the efficient application of gamification and educational technologies. It also promotes teamwork among educators so they may exchange resources, tactics, and experiences in implementing gamified education. Moreover, it provides uniform possibilities for gamification in all classes; expand access to technology tools in schools.

It is additionally recommended that teachers need to create plans to control big class sizes and integrate gamification more systematically into the curriculum to support pedagogical goals and facilitate its adoption.

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