Med School Goes to War: Using an Online Game to Teach about Survival During Conflict

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Objectives

- Describe the game
- Summarize students’ reflections
- Explore how the gaming experience may help students relate to the care of these populations post-migration and resettlement.
Health and Human Rights

Topics

- UN treaties and instruments (UDHR)
- Refugee, Asylee Health
- Torture
- Women’s Health (fistula, FGM)
- Trafficking; LGBTI
- Dual Loyalty

Pedagogy

- Class discussions
- Faculty Lectures
- Short movies
- Readings
- Speakers/guests
After 2 Weeks we tend to remember:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Nature of Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Verbal Receiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Hearing Words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Looking at Pictures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Watching a movie, Looking at an Exhibit, Watching a Demonstration, Seeing it Done on Location</td>
<td>Visual Receiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70%</td>
<td>Participating in a discussion, Giving a Talk</td>
<td>Receiving/Participating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>Doing a Dramatic Presentation, Simulating the Real Experience, Doing the Real Thing</td>
<td>Doing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gaming

- “Serious gaming” or “applied gaming”
- Combining training and assessment of clinical decision-making in a "fun and challenging way".
- No evidence of “utility of games as a teaching strategy for health professionals”.

Cochrane Review: Educational games for health professionals
“Gaming as a teaching strategy has proven to be an effective way of conveying information in a stimulating, appealing manner. Games facilitate both beginning and experienced nurses' learning by providing an opportunity for experience without the danger or fear of jeopardizing patient safety”.
Serious Games

- Purpose: to improve individual’s knowledge, skills, or attitudes in the “real” world.

- Serious games applied to **medical or health**-related purposes are **growing rapidly** in numbers and in types of applications.

- Applied to rehabilitation in disabled patients; promote healthy behavior in children; patient education; **training medical personnel**
The Heart of Serious Game Design

Theory
- Learning
- Cognition
- Pedagogy
- Perception
- Gender
- Affect
- Flow-Presence
- Psychology
- Persuasion
- Consumer Behavior

Content
- Cognitive Tutors
- Corporate Training
- Museums
- Health
- Social Issues
- Science
- Ecology
- K-12, Higher Ed
- Military Training
- Everything Else

Serious Games

Game Design
- HCI
- Fun
- Simulation
- World Building
- Advergames
- Technical Writing
- Storytelling
- Level Design
- Design
- Avatars
- NPCs
- Artificial Intelligence
- Programming
- Comics
- Art
- 3D, 2D

Cognitive Tutors
- Corporate Training
- Museums
- Health
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Siege survival video game This War of Mine, reviewed
February 24, 2015 at 08:25

So interesting! Wonder if we could somehow incorporate this into the class!
http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/gaming/2015/02/siege_survival_video_game_this_war_of_mine_reviewed.html

Sent from my iPhone
This War of Mine

- Virtual world.
- Avatars
- Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs)
- Focused on socializing, exploring, reacting and building.
- Opportunities for student interaction, intense engagement, scripted immersive experiences, simulations, role-playing
Student Instructions

During 8-weeks

- “Stay alive”
- Take notes
- Presentation
- Final Reflection (prompts)
- Trigger Warnings and Consent
- N=20 (11 + 8 + 1)
Barriers

- Software requires download; has significant system requirements (processing power, up-to-date video card, fast Internet connection)
- Cost
- Learning curve for navigation and interaction is steep
- Possibilities for technical problems and failures
- Getting hooked
Reflections

The looters must've been in a hurry, there's still a lot of stuff left.
Themes

Knowledge

Mental Health

Emotions

Vulnerability

Moral/Ethical
Knowledge, Perspective

- “The game was useful for developing an understanding of civilian struggle in conflict” (AD-M)
- “I was able to experience in a very small way the pressures of survival and the difficult decisions that need to be weighed and made” (CC-F)
- “Attempting to sustain the group during the game helped to reinforce how difficult it must be for those actually living in war torn areas around the globe.” (MP-M)
Knowledge, Perspective

“...I have gained a greater perspective of the realities of wartime and have been encouraged to reflect more deeply on how I would act, and whether I would survive, in such an incredibly challenging situation.” KC-F

“I was confronted by the harsh, too-often ignored realities that civilians face during conflict. The game gives a glimpse into the daily life of civilians that can only be described as devastating hopelessness and perpetual suffering.” (DX-M)
Emotions

Empathy

“…turning away from the situation was not an option even though the young girl was a complete stranger….perhaps because we are both females and could relate better to her at that point..I was so afraid for her that if we did not put Pavle at risk in trying to help her, I think I would have trouble falling asleep that night”. NB-F

“I can understand the characters and how helpless and hopeless they must have felt.” NG-F

Distrust

…”realizing that while I am willing to help someone, I will have a slight distrust of them at first” (AD-M)

 “…difficulty of identifying friends” CC-F

“This game continuously put you on edge and ultimately boiled down to whether or not you could trust the person in front of you.” AO-F
Moral, Ethical Decisions

“I eventually came to a point where I ended up taking goods from an elderly couple and from refugees staying in the church. This was something that did not sit well with me and apparently did not sit well with my character, who soon became depressed”. MP-M
Moral, Ethical Decisions

- (on hiding in shadow and witnessing a soldier harass and drag a woman and not intervening) “that decision sticks with me more than anything else we did….my idealism screams that of course, we should have stepped in. Even without arms, we should have done something. We had spent the whole game trying to do as little harm as possible…(help others in many ways)…did all of our attempts to help others unravel in mere moments? MG-F”
“I hated the thought of taking someone else’s sustenance for my own survival, even though my probability of dying increased as a result. I am proud of this decision that I made, and although it affected me poorly in the long run, would like to think that I would do the same if actually in this situation.” SP-F
“Reflecting on these experiences, I am forced to face a horrifying reality: Just how far would I go to stay alive in a time of conflict? Would I be willing to steal, ignore the plight of others, or even kill someone? I don’t know about real life, but in the game I went so far as to steal and to refuse help to others…**I thought I was a victim of war, but had I become a perpetrator?**” RL-M
Mental Health

- “Our desperate actions played a toll on us psychologically. Pavle committed suicide on day 16. After being alone for two days, Marin also succumbed to his depression and committed suicide on day 20. It wasn’t starvation, sniper fire, or bombs, but the psychological weight of war and conflict that ended the game.” RL-M
“having no company around the no belongings to make her feel like a real person or connect her to the world…she would have died due to her emotional and mental state. This is when I realized how important a person’s sense of humanity and mental health is to their survival” CC-F

“I realized that emotional and psychological health has the same or even greater survival impact than food.” AO-F
“I was very afraid that as a female avatar in the war zone setting I would become a rape victim...hence even before starting the game, I already had a defensive mechanism in place...I decided that I would choose to be a male avatar if given the option. While this decision brought me a glimpse of peace and a sense of protection, I also felt helpless and ashamed...I was being dishonest in choosing the opposite gender and I didn’t have the confidence in my ability to navigate the avatar to safety.... I was already assuming the the female avatar’s skill sets would not be as great compared to a male avatar and that the more superior skills sets in a male avatar would be better to ensure my chance of survival.....how could I be so sexist? But on reflection, if I were actually being placed in a warzone in reality, I would still wish to be a male”. NB-F.
“The incidence with the elderly couple was an interesting example of how easily vulnerability can be exploited, since the couple’s inability to defend themselves made our quest for food safe and simple.”

KM-F
Applying the lessons

 수집한 학문적 사례의 요약

“Before playing the game I didn’t really understand depression, but now I think I have gained a better understanding of how debilitating it can be and can better empathize with others, which I think is an amazing lesson to learn as a person who wants to treat others compassionately.”  CC-F

“… with a game like this, we are forced to be empathetic and think of the unique needs and challenges of these people. I believe this game can induce stronger and more visceral emotions regarding the egregious human rights violation, and this may encourage more passionate charity and advocacy on the issue of human rights.”  DX-M

“I am still haunted by our decision to save our own character and not intervene…the questions of whether to bear witness or intervene that have haunted me in the game suffuses all of our lives, whether we recognize it or not.”  MG-F
Applying the lessons

“‘We need to reevaluate our exclusion criteria and ensure that we are not allowing nations to reject asylum seekers by loopholes and loose applications of Article 1f. After playing *This War of Mine*, given the criminal choices my characters made, I don’t think they would have been granted asylum if they managed to escape their war-torn country… when my survival instincts kick in, what am I truly capable of in times of conflict? Would I do anything to stay alive? We can no longer use the desperate actions of victims of war in conflict zones to excuse ourselves from the moral responsibility to take in the world’s asylum seekers.’” RL-M

The *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951*
Limitations

- It’s a game & controlled by designers and algorithm
- Self-selected group
- Student who chose not to play. Why?
- “I sometimes felt genuinely upset after playing the game for a short while, even though I knew intellectually that it was just a game.” AY-F
Acknowledgments
Questions & Suggestions

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