Making Learning Engaging Through Interactive Games

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Week – 02

Lecture – 06

So, now we get on to the exciting part of actually creating some of these games ourselves. We have seen inspirations of games that have been used in classrooms and how do we go about creating ourselves. As mentioned earlier, one way is to start from scratch but that's prolonged and time consuming and even for interested teachers there is a time investment needed. The easiest way that I would recommend for any new person wanting to venture into this methodology is to leverage tools and templates that are available in plenty. I am going to show a couple of examples but do not be constrained by only these. Use these as starters and inspirations and you can find many more in the web.

So, which one do we get started with? Whenever we think of board games, the most common answer that we would like to hear or we would hear from people around us is the snake and ladder. It's popular universally. It's known in different names, but essentially you have the same game board and with the snakes pulling you down and ladders taking you up. It is popular since the very young age but the big thing is that it has always been used only for fun which means that you use the randomness of a die, you roll, you fall down a snake, you get up a ladder and the first to finish is the winner.

It's purely used for fun purposes. Now let us try and see how we can leverage the fun element, modify a little bit and use it in the context of a learning game. Now here is one example and you will find plenty on the net and you will find It widely used as an educational tool both in corporates as well as educational institutions for awareness creation. I just pulled up something that was readily available which shows about the snake and ladder being customized for the health benefits. As you can see, the ladder The ladders are pointing to areas which are good for health, like for example, consuming fruits and vegetables every day.

That's a big positive. And let's see another example, exercise five to six days a week. These are things that improve our health. Now let's take a look at the snakes. Waist size greater

than 43 inches for men and 38 for women.

Now again, this is more about their health standard, but essentially a large waist size is something to be avoided. And another example is aerated drinks, fruit juices, etc. So, snakes and ladders have been enhanced, the regular game has been enhanced so that the context of falling or in this case of depleting health and improvement in health have been highlighted on the board itself. So, this becomes a learning game rather than a pure fun or an entertainment game. As the people play this game, they not only just fall and rise, but they also kind of get to know what is making them fall and rise in the context of, in this particular case, it's got to do with healthy habits.

So as we play this game, you get to know a few things that improves our health and depletes our health. This can be customized in any classroom context or any subject by fitting in the appropriate things which act as draggers or enhancers. For example, it can be used in the case of, let us say, chemical reaction. What are the things that will accelerate the reaction? What are the things that will impede? It can be used for what do you say, other subjects, like let's say accounting, profit and loss. What factors would enhance the profitability of a company and what would cause losses? So if those things are fitted in the respective cells, it can be automatically customized and made relevant to that context.

So, this is one way of making a snake and ladder as a learning game. You can use an excel sheet and put in the cell numbers. You can use simple snake and ladder pictures that are available. There are a lot of templates available and in fact editable templates too in the teachers, pay teachers website and all we need to do is just key in the relevant context. Now here is another example of a slightly enhanced type of a snake and ladder.

The thing is there are still snakes and ladders as you can see but the snake and ladder mechanism also has been brought in outside of the snake and ladder itself. What I mean by that is For example, let us say they have introduced cells like go back one space. I mean, typically a snake would have made you fall a couple of cells, but here it is a small variant where they have just made move back one space. They give some incentives like roll again, which was not in the regular snake and ladder, but this is an enhanced mechanic. Then lose a turn.

Once again, these are things that cause interest in the game. Go ahead, one space, etc. So, this is slightly enhanced version. I have borrowed the template source, which I have highlighted at the bottom of the screen. This is again a free editable snake and ladder game template.

Here again one could actually fit in the context in the respective cells. Or another better

way to do is create a set of flashcards which are questions related to the context of the game. It could be a social studies game, it could be a economics game, it could be English game, English grammar, mathematics, you name it. You name the context and it can be customized for that and it can be played across all age groups. Finally, games like these are things that facilitate interaction and enable peer learning.

 So, let's say one can create a set of let's say 20 to 30 question cards and the question can be asked by one player to another player and only if they get it right, can they be given the opportunity to roll the die. And once they roll the die, depending on where they fall in, they can actually take the action. So, multiple variants are possible and each variant causes that amount of excitement and interactivity and fun element while playing the game.