Motivation for learning? Students’ perception of gamification experience in Physiotherapy Education

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Gamification, the use of game elements in non-game contexts, has become popular in higher education, with a major aim of enhancing learning motivation (Banfield & Wilkerson, 2014; Pedersen & Poulsen, 2016). Yet, it is unknown how physiotherapy students perceive gamified education experience and better conceptualisations of gamification are needed.

Using gamified virtual patient case studies, this research explored:

• Whether and how gamified education motivated physiotherapy students’ learning
• How other factors such as class design and mechanics affected gamified experience

This is a mixed-method study using focus group interviews and a survey to explore students’ gamified learning experience.

All students experienced six redesigned gamified case studies – 3 of which were built using iSpring and 3 were in traditional text-based format.

Participants were Year-3 physiotherapy students (n=100) enrolled in the Neurological Physiotherapy II subject.

All students were invited to complete a 5-point Likert Scale survey and 10 students were purposefully selected to join one of the two focus group interviews.

32% of the class completed the survey: 96.875% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed the gamification experience and 93.75% of them agreed or strongly agreed that the use of gamification in class was useful.

Qualitative thematic analysis together with survey results revealed two major findings:

1. Students perceived gamified education as motivating through satisfying competence and social needs as well as enhancing self-efficacy.

2. Authentic patient videos, class activities that allowed conflict resolution and reflection, as well as the use of leaderboards are enablers in gamified education.

Conclusion

• Embedding gamification in physiotherapy education has its potential
• Virtual patient videos should be authentic and activities should facilitate controversial discussion
• Clear guidance and feedback from instructors are essential
• Leaderboard can potentially motivate learners; however, team dynamic needs to be fostered in order to achieve the optimal benefits of social interaction

Selected References


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