Leslie Holwerda and Diana Maliszewski

Game-Based Learning vs. Gamification: A Conversation

Diana: I checked with my daughter, because she's on her school debate team, and she told me that we should start with being clear about defining the terms involved. I suspect that for many people, there's no difference between Game-Based Learning and Gamification. So, how do you define these words?

Leslie: Gamification as I understand it is applying the way a video game works to an educational experience. Gamification would include scoring, levelling up, leaderboards, and alliances. In educational terms: assessment, task completion, class rankings, collaboration. That being said depending on who is presenting or defining, the definition may also include digital interactions and motivation to change behaviours.

Game-Based Learning has been around education for many years. I believe it has been referred to as a "simulation game" in the past. Recent digital innovations have introduced virtual experiences for students to acquire skills using games which reflect an experience in the real world.

Diana: Thanks for clarifying these terms. One of my favourite (and unbiased) definitions of these terms comes from **http:// www.teachthought.com/technology/difference-gamification-game-based-learning/** and this is what they say:

> Gamification is the application of game-like mechanics to non-game entities to encourage a specific behaviour. Game-based learning is simply learning through games.

I prefer Game-Based Learning (or GBL) over gamification for several reasons. Gamification frankensteins two cultures – school culture and game culture – and respects neither of them by using elements out of the context in which they exist. The underlying assumption is "school is boring, so we have to jazz it up" and "games are fun but fluff so let's take pieces of it and add it to school.".When you apply game elements to non-game things, this is a form of extrinsic rewards, and we all know that intrinsic rewards are much better than extrinsic rewards. Extrinsic rewards can be detrimental to motivation.

Leslie: When you put it that way I can see your point but why not include gamification as an alternate for those who would enjoy or benefit from the change of pace?