

Editorial Preface

Video Games as Systems for Content Delivery, Data Collection, Assessment, and Entertainment

Brock Dubbels, Department of Psychology, Neuroscience, and Behavior, McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada

Game research has come along way since our first issue in 2009, and this current issue reflects the diversity of questions, applications, and methods that have emerged with the growth of games research as an interdisciplinary field. The issue offers a variety of topics in the area of method. Games can be subject to a method of data collection and study, and also be an applied method as a delivery system for measuring human behavior.

In our opening article, Law & Leung offer games as a method for delivering content and training. They explore the effectiveness of online role-play simulation for tackling groupthink in crisis management training in Naturalistic Decision-Making (NDM). They report that conventional methods for transferring crisis management knowledge are through lectures has led to a focus on individual tasks such as getting a situation update report from site officers using an agreed protocol, and is more focused on the responsibilities of the team members, rather than on the team aspects in the process. They make a case for the use of Role Play Simulation (RPS) for improving learning incomes for observation and critical reflection. RPS allows for the creation of synthetic or artificial crisis situations. RPS requires participants to role-play and experience decision-making under stress through computer-mediated interactions, where participants are given opportunity through application to practice decision-making and examine the possible underlying processes without any pre-set consequences.

In article two, Borderie & Michinov propose a non-invasive/ non-interruptive method for measurement of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) Flow construct directly during game-play sessions. They offer a case study to examine the efficacy of this method of observing player behaviors through replay analysis). This study highlights the importance of thorough analysis of the gameplay in order to identify Flow experience in all of its complexity.

In article three, Foster & Shah report on an identity change process that is catalyzed through digital game play and facilitated by reflection and discussion activities. The mixed-method study examined the role of identity construction and its role in motivation and acquisition of mathematics knowledge. They offer a technique they describe as Game Network Analysis (GaNA), which they describe as an ecologically game-based learning framework. The study reports outcomes of 9th grade students' gameplay with Dimension M. Data sources included interviews, in-class participant and video observations, and pre-post assessments. They report statistically significant gains in mathematics by the students explained by engaging in identity exploration activities that allowed them to value mathematics.

In article four, Ritzhaupt, Poling, Frey, Kang, & Johnson make a hermeneutical-phenomenological investigation into the experiences of university professors who taught graduate courses using games, simulations, and virtual environments (GSVE). This research documents the design decisions, theoretical perspectives, and pedagogical frameworks of these courses. A fuller understanding of how GSVE courses are actually being implemented can help provide insight and guidance for future practice and can also contribute to the knowledge base of using GSVE in university courses, and aims to provide a clear snapshot of GSVE in action by examining the faculty of such courses. The research question guiding this research was “How do instructors describe their experience teaching GSVE courses?” To this extent, we use the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge framework as a coherent platform to study such courses in action and to shed light on the design, development, and implementation of GSVE courses, and is intended to ways provide a starting place and road map for instructors seeking to implement their own GSVE courses at their respective institutions.

These article offer indication that games are now studied from many perspectives. Not just as entertainment, but methods from content delivery, methods for data collection, assessment, and psychological research. In that last five years, game research has come closer to a reliable area of study, and lucrative profession, with many subsidiary industries. As a journal, we have also come along way. Since our first issue in 2009, we have entered the major access databases, and have published some very interesting research by amazing researchers. This current issue reflects the diversity of questions, applications, and methods that have emerged with the growth of games research as an interdisciplinary field. The issue offers a variety of topics in the area of method.

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Editor-in-Chief
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