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Newsletter 4

Game of Towns

A GAME-FOCUSED ASSESSMENT TOOL

How to assess properly?

Regarding to the project’s intellectual output, our aim was to create a properly based and up-to-date assessment method. As proper assessment is crucial in any type of learning, it is a must to get familiar with opinions related to it. Therefore we started our work with a qualitative research in order to identify the games, tests and/or assignment types that are preferred and used in higher education. We also collected past experiences and best practices from the target groups.

To gain deeper knowledge in this topic, the following issues were discussed with the most important members of higher education, students and lecturers:

- the importance and forms of assessment;
- known used and preferred assessment methods;
- gamification;
- evaluation of different assessment methods.

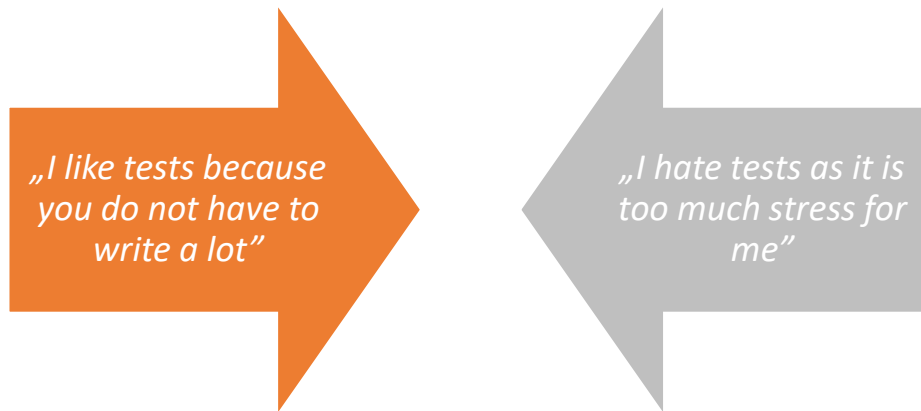
The data collection methods were adapted to the needs of the target group, therefore focus group interviews were organised in case of the lecturers and individual in-depth interviews with students.

Focus group interviews	In-depths interviews
Total number: four (One by each partner)	Total number: 40 (Ten by each partner)
6 – 10 participants/each group	Approx. 45 min./interview
Different backgrounds of participants	Bachelor students (full time and part time)
<i>Specially prepared scenario made in English and translated to national languages</i>	
<i>The collected data was analysed together (separate analysis on data from lecturers and students)</i>	
<i>Finally, results were compared and analysed together</i>	

The main characteristics of the researches

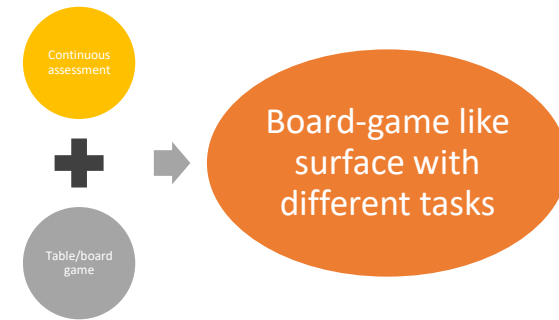
Research results

After analysing the responses some facts were supported. One of them is, that there is not one and only method to apply – the best assessment method depends on many factors. According to the students: they like the methods that fit to their own personality. Therefore different methods received completely different judgements, as the following example about using simple tests questions, shows:



Teachers and lecturers prefer the methods that are easy to evaluate – and appropriate to see the approach of the students. Both teachers/lecturers and students like continuous assessment processes and both of them know and prefer gamification.

Based on these results the suggestion was to elaborate a board game-like assessment tool that is able for continuous assessment.



Game design

The assessment planned in the frame of the project is a simple board game-like one. The chosen type is the “Trivia Challenge”. A show-style game was created where players must answer questions about various aspects of the subject. The game can include a variety of question formats, such as simple choice, multiple choice, and true or false.

The game is designed to be used for three main reasons, these are considered as three main game-modes:

1. Placement test: to be performed at the beginning of the course in order to measure the entry level;
2. Self-test: students can check their progress at any time during the course. The self-test is meant to encourage continuous learning;

3. Final test: in this case the game-shape test can be conducted at the end of the course to assess the learning outcomes, and may also be treated as an exam.

The board

The basic board is the same in every game-modes. It is a map of Europe showing different towns – these are the steps/fields, where questions can be addressed. This shape has the potential to create an own story behind according to the exact subject or topic the teacher wants to use it for.

However, the board itself can be slightly modified by the teacher: fields (towns) can be added, removed, or repositioned. The place where the player stands is represented by a horse – it will move according to the student’s progress.



The *Game of Towns* basic board

The main advantage of this game is that it is easy: it is easy to use (by students) easy to edit (by teachers and lecturers) and easy to adapt to any given subject. Teachers and lecturers can also benefit from its different game modes: at the beginning of the course the game helps to spot the weakest points in the students’ knowledge by creating easy-to-analyse cobweb diagrams. During the course it can be used as a possibility to practice and as a test for the student to see how far he/she approached. At the end of the course, the third game mode can replace other assessment methods.

However it must be stressed that the board is a basis – it needs effort from the teacher/lecturer to build it up. This means the creation of the background: the making up of its story and the elaboration of the question sets. Once these are ready, the editing of the game is quite easy. It is just as simple to modify or exchange the questions to refresh the test (and avoid becoming known to the students).

Future development possibilities

All the project partners have been given the software, so it can be installed in their own systems and so there can be multiple versions of the game. The board and the questions can also be translated to the national languages – and further development can be done as desired.

We do hope, both teachers and students will enjoy playing the *Game of Towns*!