

From a workshop in gamedesign to a functional game

”PAU-kliken” (The Pedagogical Assistants Clique)

”A good game development process that enables us to unite media competences, communication skills, motivation, cooperation, curiosity, the desire to learn and the ability to solve problems and think independently.”

In the beginning of 2012 the game instructor Christian Fønnesbech held a workshop with the participants in the European projects ”Scandinavian Game Developers” and ”LABlearning.” Within half an hour the first sod was turned in the creation of the learning game ”PAU-kliken”.

The themes of the game were all taken from the paedagogical and psychological area: sexuality, youth issues, friendships, boyfriends and girlfriends.....

Our goal was to create a game where the players would put on different roles while discussing and trying to solve the the topics on a social media – such as facebook.

We wanted the students to experiment, work with topics that offered greater motivation- and learning potential, and the students could get more involvement was big. A change of the learning processes – something else than the classical top down teaching method.

So now we had this draft for a game. We would really like the students to become co-creators. Allow them to influence the game and carry out the tasks at hand. We were trying to use gaming in a didactic and vocational way.

The game is fiction, but should resemble reality as much as possible. This way the students can use their own media and action competences.

The game

A. It is a game about communication and it takes place on a social media. We have tried three different platforms : Facebook, Chatroom in First Class and Google+.

Google+ seems to be the most accessible for our game when all the profiles are made up. It is also very realistic and many students know it already, which is very important.

B. As a warm up exercise we gave the students an exercise in the very different ways we interpret information about other people. How we bias it with our own values and prejudices.

C. Groups are formed (3 prs) and each group is given one character (male or female) that they will be playing throughout the game.
All in all there are 8 characters for the students and two/three characters that a teacher or guest can control.
Each group can use one computer and they have to cooperate and agree on how they act according to the dilemma, their character and their given temperament.

D. We tried to find plots or dilemmas that could be relevant for young people:
1. "your two very best friends start dating and your friendship is affected"
2. A "one night stand" ends with a girl getting pregnant. The guy knows nothing about it until the girl one day reveals it to everyone around them and he is suddenly a father.
3. Is it ok to find a boyfriend or girlfriend for practical reasons?
The stories are presented on the "social media" in writing, as "communication" between the involved persons, through images. The involved persons are characters controlled by the teacher or guests.

E. During the three rounds of playing we have changed the formation of the characters and which temperament that could work best.
It ended up with these three: passive temperament, aggressive temperament and assertive temperament. This has its root in theory about communication strategies that the students need to recognize as practitioners.
WE give each character/group a temperament they have to play by. Often this temperament is the opposite of the group members' natural temperaments

F. The rules of the game: Each member of the group has to agree on how to act upon the dilemma presented.
The reactions MUST be controlled by the temperament given to the character.
Take the time needed to get to learn the character. What kind of language should be used, how would the character react being aggressive/passive/assertive?
And then comment.

G. The game lasts an hour. If you include the warm up exercise and introduction it lasts an hour and a half.

We have played the game three times. Each time we have evaluated on the game in the class and this way we have picked up on what to change and the students have influence on the development of the game.

Summing up and new perspectives

Through the game sessions the students have been extremely involved.

We have worked in a game forum with room for the power of every students' imagination and engagement

1. When the game concept is complete the students will have better possibilities of creating the dilemmas themselves.

We haven't had much time/room for this part during this period.

Be aware of backward readers/persons with a reading disability when forming the groups since writing is a precondition for participating in the game.

2. The game could be the start of several vocational discussions and could be used in several classes such as theory of education, Psychology, Communication, Social Studies and health science subject