An Analysis of Matches and Mismatches of Personality Type Between Students and Instructor in a Gamified Undergraduate Sport Management Course

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Of the many issues that affect students and teachers in the classroom, variations in the personalities of students and instructors and the use of technology and gamification strategies within teaching appear to be important factors in the success of both teacher and student and can greatly affect the satisfaction of students. Technology’s use in the classroom for the purpose of increasing student engagement is not a new concept (Archer, 2014 & Gebre, 2014). Computer games are thought to be effective tools for teaching challenging and complex procedures without the negative impact from wrong or unjustified choices. In addition, research suggests that the use of gamification, defined by Dominquez (2013), as the use of game design elements and game mechanics in non-game contexts, are beneficial to engaged learning. Games are active in nature, increase motivation and satisfaction, accommodate a variety of learning styles, reinforce mastery, and provide interactive decision making context (Charles and McCallister, 2004; Egenfedle-Nielsen, 2005; Squire, 2004).

When the use of technology by instructors is combined with gamification as an instructional strategy, it is believed that student success is affected greatly, resulting in better grades and increased comprehension (Giannetto, 2013) as well as improved satisfaction of students. As sport management faculty continue to search for best practices to prepare students for the challenges of a career in the sport industry, the use of gamification as a strategy is gaining support as well as criticism (Koivisto, 2014). Thus, the purpose of this paper was to determine the impact of interactions between an instructor and students with matched and mismatched MBTI’s, within an undergraduate sport management course that utilizes gamification as a significant instructional strategy.

This course was taught in Moodle, an open source Learning Management System (LMS) and used a module that was developed to gamify course content and leverage many of the existing features in Moodle, while adding in a points system tied to objectives and activities, a leaderboard and achievements. This module, believed to be easily scalable, was developed to meet the needs of a diverse range of courses and content. There was an additional plugin that allowed students to work with an avatar that displayed personality characteristics, a short biography, and MBTI description. Students worked with their avatar throughout the course, building their career path in order to reach their “dream job” while learning concepts and developing skills necessary for successful sport managers.

Course Overview

Students taking the Introduction to Sport Management course at North Carolina State University were asked to complete a short online version of the MBTI before considering their career aspirations within the sport management industry. The instructor also completed the same version of the MBTI, creating a match with some students and a mismatch with other students. Students in the course were required to choose a “dream job” and complete activities to earn the minimum points required to help their avatar attain entry level, mid-career and eventually a dream job. During the course students were required to make typical career decision choices such as internships, graduate school, professional development activities and job opportunities etc.) on behalf of their avatar. Each choice made required students to complete a “low, moderate, or high stakes” activity and produce some instructor approved proof of completion before completing a forum discussion. Based upon the quality of the choices made, the avatar was awarded points, thus experiencing the process similar to that of professionals making career choices. At the end of game play, students were debriefed by the instructor and TA regarding decisions and career choices.

Data analysis and evaluation will occur throughout the spring 2014 semester and will be completed in late April 2014. To determine if a match or mismatch between instructor and student MBTI affect student achievement and satisfaction, qualitative measures including a review of forum and reflection statements will be completed by the
course instructor and TA. Student satisfaction will be measured by student course evaluations (mid semester and final course evaluations). Student achievement will be measured by performance on quizzes and examinations. Appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical procedures will be applied to all data.