AFLA GAME



AflaSet Manual

Erasmus+

Project number:
2021-1-IT03-KA220-YOU-000028849

Introduction

Within the contents of this manual, we shall chronicle the development and progression of the Aflagame Project.

We shall describe its game development, the fundamental concepts underlying it, and the engaging Game Design process that leveraged various European partners along models with their teams to give life to a genuine games related to financial literacy.

> Just play. Have fun.
> Enjoy the game.
> **MICHAEL JORDAN**

The fundamental principle at the heart of this endeavor is the pivotal concept of financial education. However, what underscores the importance of initiating an Erasmus+ project is the endeavor to cultivate heightened awareness and autonomy among European youth regarding their potential and the economic-financial resources available to them.

Aflatoun International, an NGO committed to the dissemination of Social and Financial Education since 2005, is the primary promoter of this project and has called upon representatives from six different European countries to collaborate unanimously, contributing to the creation of a Game Design model for educational purposes, as thorough and participatory as possible.
Indeed, six prototypes have been developed, each with distinctive features, components, game dynamics, and objectives. However, each game has undergone a process of testing, verification, integration, and redefinition based on a shared and consolidated design theory.

This theory is rooted in the concepts of Game and Game Design applied to educational contexts, embracing non-formal learning, Gamification, and gender inclusivity.

In the following pages, we will delve into the detailed exploration of all these concepts, stepping into the Game Design process step by step to reveal the dynamics of our games and present each of the prototypes that have been created in harmony with this theory.

All games have been carefully tested, implemented, and clearly defined with the aim of being used in various educational contexts by the target audiences. The complete manual, including the instructions for each game, will be disseminated in the school settings of the territories participating in the Aflagame Project.



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Dear Trainers, Teachers, Educators, Parents, Activists,

We are pleased to present to you an extraordinary document called the AflaSet Manual. This is the result of several years of work by six partner organizations collaborating on the project titled "AflaGame: Innovative tool for quality work with young on enhancing financial skills," funded under the Erasmus+ KA220-YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth program during the period 2022-2024.

Who:

The document you are presently perusing was crafted through the cooperative efforts of six non-governmental organizations. These are:

IG Students Srl Impresa Sociale,
Italy, Milano

Stichting Aflatoun International,
Netherlands, Amsterdam, www.aflatoun.org

Csoport-téka Egyesület,
Hungary, Budaörs, www.csoportteka.com

Lietuvos Vaiku Fondas,
Lithuania, Vilnius, www.lvf.lt

Nadacia Otvorenej Spolocnosti,
Bratislava/Open Society Foundation/NOS-OSF,
Slovakia, Bratislava, www.osf.sk

Science for Environment Foundation/
Fundacja Nauka dla Środowiska,
Poland, Koszalin,www.ndsfund.org

In addition to many values, we are united by the common social and financial education program, AFLATOUN **www.aflatoun.org**
Together with over 100 countries, we form a network of partner organisations, teachers, supporters and staff, delivering high-quality life skills education through a social franchise model. We offer social and financial education to millions of children and young people worldwide, empowering them to make a positive change for a more equitable world.

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Games, Gamification and Game Based Learning



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What is a game?

A game is a fun, voluntary, and internally justified activity that involves both children and adults. It originates from a pure need for entertainment and is characterized by the definition of a specific objective that drives the participants' actions. The game is regulated by precise rules that dictate the behavior of the players and have specified consequences for those who violate them.

Games have a limited time development, predetermined or changing based on when one or more players achieve the game's goal. Games often imply competition or challenge, both individually and within a team. Single-player games demand focus, flexibility, and self-trust, along with a certain dose of autonomy. In the case of teamwork games, they promote cooperation, requiring collaboration, agreement, sacrifice, and trust among the members.

A game is entertainment, aiming first and foremost to be enjoyable for each participant. It is clear that playing is the most natural and spontaneous activity children can engage in: it is the primary instrument through which they learn to relate to other people and the world. During recreational activities, children lay the foundation for healthy emotional, mental, and social growth, learning to be creative, use imagination, and build their personality. A game represents a milestone in a person's comprehensive growth and should be encouraged, promoted, and enjoyed to the fullest.

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What is Gamification and Game Based Learning?

Whether spontaneous or encouraged, a game is undeniably the most engaging method for learning. Our mind's capabilities can be trained and developed through play: psychomotor abilities, memory, logic, problem-solving, and creativity all require constant and ongoing training that extends beyond childhood. Recognizing the relevance of games as a means during the learning process of any kind is crucial, even during adolescence and until full maturity.

Playing in school, in the oratory, during sports training, or in any other learning and social context encourages the active participation of young people. It creates a peaceful and positive atmosphere within the learning environment, enhancing the pleasure of learning.

When the game is considered in the metacognitive dimension, it becomes an instrument for learning how to learn, helping students become aware of their competencies and capabilities. This is precisely why instruments related to games are increasingly used with a didactic approach. Let's delve into the details.

Gamification is a strategy that involves applying principles and elements of games in non-gaming contexts to promote the acquisition of academic competences and socio-emotional growth. Its aim is to drive learning, encourage positive group behaviors, and enhance motivation and engagement within a given context. This technique finds applications not only in the educational field but also in marketing and business training.

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The foundational elements of gamification include:

Rankings:

Leaderboards promote healthy competition among participants, encouraging active and productive engagement.

Badges:

Participants earn marks or badges, often replacing traditional numeric grades, for achieving specific goals.

Missions:

Challenges and missions throughout the game keep concentration levels high, fostering continuous engagement.

Rewards or Experience Bonus:

Participants receive rewards for completing specific activities, providing incentives for desirable actions and goal achievement.

Narrative:

An engaging story or narrative context is introduced to make the experience more exciting. Participants typically use avatars with well-defined roles and powers, such as wizards, warriors, amazons, healers, etc.

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When applied with a learning purpose, these elements make gamification a powerful interactive tool for achieving goals in terms of engagement, motivation, and productivity. It establishes a new template for the classroom and learning environment, wherein learners are not bored but actively involved and encouraged to cooperate in reaching common goals.

Game-Based Learning is a didactic strategy extensively employed in both formal and non-formal education, spanning from primary to secondary levels and beyond. This approach utilizes games as a means to teach specific content or achieve defined learning objectives. Game-based didactics leverages disciplinary content, transforming it into a challenging and entertaining learning experience. Through games, learners not only acquire knowledge but also empower and enhance their own abilities and competencies.

Key features of the game-based learning include:

Playful elements, such as objectives, rules, challenges, rewards, and competition, add an engaging and enjoyable dimension to learning. These elements make the learning process more involving and entertaining.

Active learning is a fundamental aspect of Game-Based Learning, where students actively participate in games, making decisions, solving problems, and practically applying the content of the game.

Immediate feedback is a crucial feature of games. They are often limited or single activities, providing instant feedback to actions, allowing students to check their progress and continuously improve.

Adaptability is a key advantage as teachers can personalize games according to students' needs and course objectives, seamlessly incorporating didactic content into the game dynamics. Game-Based Learning can be connected to any subject, using specific topics, and can be integrated into a classic structured group of students.

Game variety is another strength of Game-Based Learning, encompassing a wide range of games, including role-playing games, board games, interactive quizzes, and online games. It can be analog or digital, featuring a simple and user-friendly structure.



This approach is based on the idea that integrating games into the learning environment enhances the effectiveness of educational actions, inspiring students to develop their social and emotional competence while acquiring new knowledge. Additionally, it fosters empathy among participants, supports solid cooperation, and creates a more relaxed working environment. In this education method, the player takes a central role, increasing proactivity and taking responsibility for their own learning progress.

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Gamification Theories

Intrinsic Motivation Theory

rooted in psychology, is crucial for understanding effective gamification. It revolves around engaging individuals based on their inherent satisfaction rather than external rewards. When applied to gamification, it emphasizes autonomy (allowing choices), mastery (providing challenges for skill development), and purpose (aligning with personal goals). By incorporating these elements, gamification seeks to make the gaming experience inherently rewarding, going beyond external incentives like badges. This approach fosters a more meaningful and enduring connection between users and the gamified content, enhancing engagement.

Flow Theory

introduced by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, is a key concept in gamification that focuses on creating an optimal and immersive user experience. The theory describes a mental state called "flow," where individuals are fully absorbed in an activity, experiencing deep concentration and a sense of enjoyment. In the context of gamification, designers aim to facilitate flow by balancing the challenge level of a task with the user's skill level. When challenges align with the user's abilities, and there is a clear goal, feedback, and a feeling of control, individuals are more likely to enter a state of flow. This heightened state of engagement enhances the overall gaming experience, making it more enjoyable and rewarding for the player. Gamification strategies often leverage flow theory to create seamless, challenging, and rewarding experiences that captivate users' attention and maintain their interest over time.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

a psychological framework guiding gamification to enhance motivation. It focuses on three basic needs: autonomy (providing choices), competence (offering challenges aligned with skills), and relatedness (encouraging social connections). In gamification, incorporating these elements fosters intrinsic motivation, making the gaming experience more engaging and satisfying for players. The aim is to empower users, help them develop skills, and facilitate social interactions within the gamified environment.

Behavior Theory

in gamification draws from principles of psychology to understand and influence user behavior. It involves using rewards, feedback, and incentives to encourage specific actions or behaviors. In this approach, the emphasis is on external motivation, where users are prompted to engage in desired behaviors through the promise of rewards or positive reinforcement. Gamification strategies based on behavioral theory often include elements such as points, badges, and leaderboards to motivate users and reinforce desired actions, steering them toward specific goals. The goal is to shape and reinforce behaviors by making the gaming experience rewarding and enjoyable, ultimately driving users to take desired actions within the gamified system.

In conclusion, player types and gamification theories are intricately intertwined, forming a robust framework for designing engaging experiences. Understanding individual motivations and underlying psychological theories provides a solid foundation for experiencing more effective gamification solutions that can inspire, instruct, and engage a wide range of participants.

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Type of Games

Welcome to the diverse realm of gaming, where innovation constantly forges new paths and offers unique experiences for enthusiasts. In this expansive landscape, various genres cater to distinct tastes, providing players with a plethora of options to explore. From heart-pounding action to intricate strategy, each genre boasts its own charm. In this context, the term "type of games" becomes a broad umbrella encompassing an array of gaming experiences. As we embark on this journey through the diverse types of games, we delve into the distinctive characteristics that define each category, unraveling the threads that weave the rich tapestry of the gaming world. Read the following to navigate through the intricacies and nuances that make each type of game a captivating adventure in its own right.

We can divide games into the following genre categories:

Action

These games emphasize the player's action and reaction speed. They usually involve elements of skill, exploration, and puzzle-solving in a dynamic environment. Among many, we can mention "Jenga" or "Spot it."

Simulation

These games seek to replicate aspects of real life or specific situations. They can include simulations of vehicles, buildings, or life situations. Examples include "Catan," "Carcassonne," or "Ticket to Ride."

Adventure

Adventure games focus on storytelling, exploration, and puzzle-solving. They often involve well-developed characters and complex plots, such as "Scythe" or the fantasy game "Talisman."

Strategy

Strategy games require planning and strategic decision-making by the player. From the classic "Risk" to the more elaborate "Wingspan," there are many examples.

Role-Playing Games (RPG)

Role-playing games allow players to take control of characters in an imaginary gaming world. RPGs often involve character progression, quests, and choices that influence the plot, such as "Dungeons & Dragons."

Puzzle

Puzzle games focus on problem-solving and logic. They can range from complex puzzles to simpler brainteasers, including "Azul."

In short, game types are mutable (and classifiable differently by target audience, theme, mechanics, or type of experience). It is not an exact science but always evolving as the landscape constantly changes based on user demands and desires. Even approaching different professional or educational fields, they mix together.

The diversity of game types offers a rich exploration ground for players of all kinds. Whether it's strategic challenges, narrative experiences, action, or pure fun, the vast world of games offers something for everyone, contributing to connecting people through a universal language.

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Why use Educational Games during Teaching and the Learning Process?

Many people tend to view a Game as a pastime or an activity that keeps children occupied. However, as will be reiterated multiple times within this manual, a Game is actually an essential component in a child's growth journey. This is why the use of educational games goes beyond mere entertainment: it provides children the opportunity to acquire new knowledge, clarify unclear concepts, or reinforce previously learned ones, using a different approach from traditional learning.

Educational games, especially when used in schools, play a fundamental role in promoting effective and engaging learning. Their significance stems from various factors that contribute to enhancing students' learning experiences.

First and foremost, educational games encourage active involvement of students. Through playful and stimulating activities, students are encouraged to actively participate in lessons, developing a natural interest in the learning process. This engagement makes lessons more lively and appealing and can enhance students' motivation. Students, in fact, need to apply the concepts and notions they learn in school in a practical context to truly understand them. Experiencing what they learn also prevents the acquired information from getting lost in the sea of information to which any student of the new millennium is daily exposed.

Educational games involve students in practical or manual activities and problem-solving. This type of learning is often more effective than passive learning or frontal lessons, which can be boring and fail to engage students. The results of learning through games are often more positive because students receive immediate feedback. This allows them to correct mistakes and learn from them in real-time, without being judged by a grade, speeding up the learning process.

Games designed for educational purposes often aim not only at understanding a specific topic or concept but also at developing cognitive skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, planning, and decision-making—skills crucial for success in life and the workforce. Another indirect and implicit consequence of these educational tools is the promotion of teamwork and collaboration among students. Through collaborative activities, students learn to communicate and work together to achieve common goals independently, without the guidance or control of an adult, acquiring important social skills.

In conclusion, educational games can be a valuable complement to traditional teaching at any level of education and in any discipline. They make learning more fun and stimulating, and this is undoubtedly the secret to maintaining high interest levels among students of all ages.

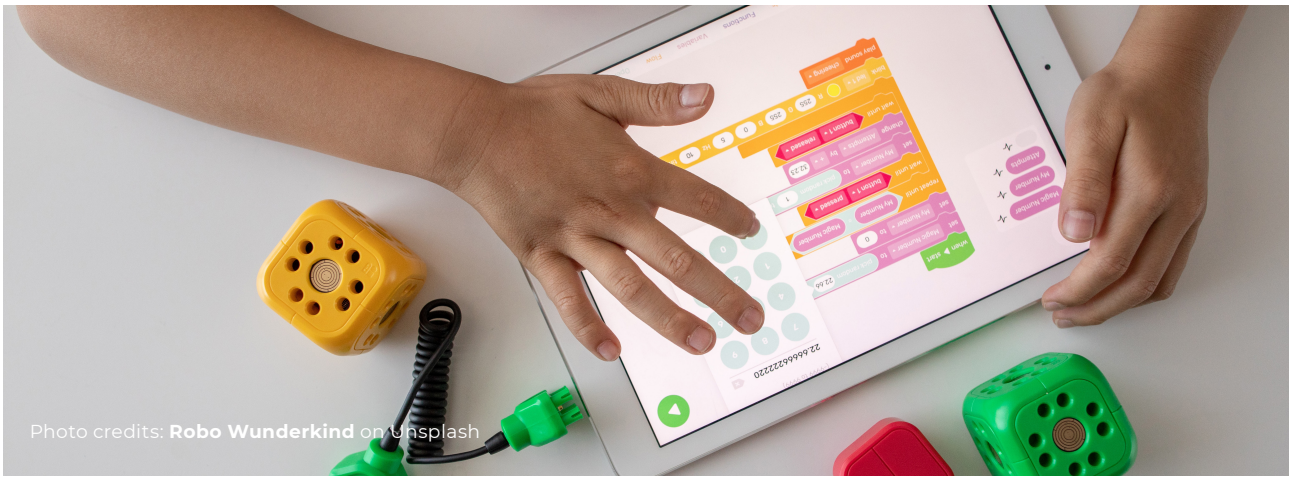


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Type of Players

Gamification, the application of game elements in non-gaming contexts, has gained increasing relevance in educational, corporate, and social settings. To fully grasp the potential of gamification, it is essential to examine the different types of players encountered during our journey and the theories underlying this innovative practice. Each of these player types contributes uniquely to the gaming ecosystem, creating a variety of experiences and interactions within the gaming community.



Players

This is the most common type of player, primarily interested in having fun and experiencing the game. Game objectives for Players may vary, but their main purpose is usually pure entertainment.



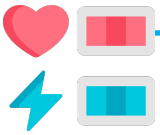
Socializers

Socializers are motivated by socializing with other players. For them, the game is a means to connect with new or existing people. They often participate in groups or social events within the game. The social dimension of the game is what attracts them the most.



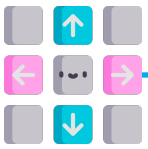
Achievers

Achievers are players who seek to accomplish specific goals within the game. These goals may be related to character progression, completing challenging missions, or achieving particular results. Achievers find satisfaction in accomplishing objectives and demonstrating their skills.



Philanthropists

These players are driven by the desire to help others within the gaming community. They may dedicate themselves to supporting newer players, sharing resources, or taking on leadership roles. Their satisfaction often comes from creating a positive and collaborative gaming environment.



Free Spirits

Free Spirits are characterized by their willingness to explore and experiment. They enjoy the creative aspect of the game and often have fun discovering new places, characters, or features. Freedom of exploration is crucial to their enjoyment.



Disruptors

Disruptors seek to challenge or change the normal course of the game. They can be players exploring glitches, hackers, or those who creatively find ways to exploit the game system. This category can sometimes generate controversial behaviors and challenges for game developers.

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