

Reflection to Support Evidence – Game Review Solve the Outbreak

Course Learning Outcomes Satisfied:

- Plan learning opportunities most suitable to the strengths and challenges of a variety of mobile learning and gaming environments.
- Integration of current cognitive learning and educational gaming theory and examination of current research around best and emerging practices.
- Critically assess and evaluate resources for best practice in mobile learning and gaming environments.

OLTD Learning Outcomes Satisfied:

- Select strategies and resources appropriate for environment, learners and learning outcomes

For my second piece of evidence for OLTD 508, I chose the review of a serious game for education that I did in collaboration with another cohort member. We reviewed the game *Solve the Outbreak*, which was produced by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in the US.

Choosing games for classroom implementation requires a thoughtful and well-planned approach. The games need to augment the students' learning, but at the same time be age-appropriate and engaging. Many 'educational' games are well intentioned, but not very fun for the student. The reason for this may be that they are simply gamified lesson plans that the students had no interest in in the first place. When we move from gamification to game-based learning, it is perhaps easier to engage the student, but more difficult to provide the educational content. For this reason, we considered James Paul Gee's "Principles on Gaming" to be able to link the game to educational outcomes. Another consideration to choosing a game is that you have to play it through to check it. In the case of *Solve the Outbreak*, there are parent and teacher guides as well as lesson plans that could easily be adapted to different curricular outcomes.

Using computer (device) -based games in the classroom is becoming more common, but it still has to be approached carefully. Planning gaming opportunities needs to take into account the demographic of the school, availability of technology, and suitability of the proposed game itself. This is where the cognitive research such as Gee's provides a foundation for choosing an appropriate game. It is also important to fully know what the resource is about and how it works before implementing it. There are plenty of 'good' reviews for educational resources that are nothing more than time fillers with little educational merit. Knowing how to select and vet the resource is also important.