

Why Play Games When There's so Much Work to Do?

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Several strategies have been proposed to improve the teaching/learning process, which should achieve most of students and contribute to the development of personal skills, ethics and values. In this process, the evaluation appears to be a critical part. Nevertheless, it is already known that better results are obtained when different tools (seminars, individual tests and theater, for example) are used. The idea of games as an educative approach is not new. In educational field, games have emerged as a tool for teaching, since they can emphasize participation, fun, motivation and interest of students, but only few information is available about their use in the evaluation process. Thus, the aim of this study was to analyze the possibility to adopt a game as an evaluation strategy of students learning about Human Endocrine System, part of the Biological Basis of Gerontology program (EACH-USP). A board game, constituted by 45 spaces, in which students/teams were placed on a marked surface on the floor, was used. Each space was associated to one of six different tasks: scrabble, mimic/drawn; right-wrong questions, fill-in-the-blanks and crossword puzzles. Tasks involved different skills requirement, including knowledge, entire team involvement, ability to deal and decision making. The evaluation process began with the elaboration of questions by the teams, which contributed with 30% of the note. Team performance during the game also represented 30%, and the last 40% referred to the collective participation. Each team was able to perform around 8 different tasks with success index of 86%. Students reported high degree of satisfaction in performing that activity and felt motivated by the cooperative atmosphere. Based on this single experience, we concluded that it is possible to evaluate learning by using a game, which is a favorable environment to the development of interpersonal skills and attitudes, and we are encouraged to try again.

Key words: Cooperative games, evaluation, teaching-learning process.