# Games in Schools EUN Academy Course
## Evaluation & Recommendations for a 2nd Round

**31/01/2015**

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## GAMES IN SCHOOLS COURSE EVALUATION

This report provides an evaluation of the Games in Schools course offered by the European Schoolnet Academy (the Academy) with the generous support of the Interactive Software Federation Europe (ISFE). It provides an overview of the participation achieved, the impact of the course on participants, and aspects of the practical implementation of the course. The evaluation is written in the light of a potential second iteration of the course in 2015 and therefore also offers concrete suggestions for improvements of the course together with a relevant budget proposal.

The report draws primarily upon the course introduction and evaluation surveys which 1039 and 278 participants completed respectively. At times the report also draws upon data provided by course participants directly within the course discussions and activities.

## BACKGROUND TO THE COURSE

The Games in Schools course was launched on 27th October 2014 and finished on 14th December 2014, although all course content remained accessible to participants until the 31st December 2014. The course was delivered via the European Schoolnet Academy platform, a newly launched MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) platform for teachers. Much of the course content was based on content created for a much smaller course designed by European Schoolnet with the support of the ISFE, which was delivered for the last time in 2013.

The course was coordinated by European Schoolnet with the support of Ollie Bray, an innovative educator and headteacher from Scotland, who provided much of the content for the course.

## WHO PARTICIPATED?

A total of 1597 people enrolled in the course who originated primarily from southern Europe. Alone 46% of participants came from the three main countries represented on the course, Greece (18%), Italy (15%) and Romania (13%). Participants from Portugal (8%), Spain (7%) and Turkey (6%) were also well represented while the participation of teachers from larger northern European countries such as Germany, France, or UK remained fairly low at about 2% each. Participants on the course were asked to add a location marker to a shared map which is displayed below:

Similarly to other Academy courses, 94% of the participants were classroom teachers with a majority working in secondary schools (63%).

77% of participants were female and a similar amount were over 35 years of age (76%). Furthermore, most participants had substantial experience of working in an education setting (70% over 11 years of experience).

In regards to using games in the classroom prior to attending the course, 38% reported of rarely or never using games in the classroom while 17% reported they did so often.

## COURSE RETENTION RATES

Of all enrolled participants, 1280 actively engaged with the content of the course, which is an 80% engagement rate. Of these, 495 completed the final module and assessment of the course and thereby qualified for the final course certificate, providing a 39% retention rate. This is a hugely positive result given that most MOOCs have a retention rate below 13%.[1] Also positive

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[1] Jordan, Katy (2014). Initial trends in enrolment and completion of massive open online courses. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 15(1) pp. 133–160.

were the within-Module retention rates, which varied between 71% and 90%. However, it should be noted here that other Academy courses offering module badges to participants have seen more consistently higher within-Module retention rates with all modules around the 85%-90% mark. This suggests that the lack of badges on the course resulted in a lower motivation to finish a module than on other courses. For a 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the course, it is therefore recommended to include digital badges.

The below table provides a more detailed overview of the course and module participation numbers.

| Course/Module | Started | Finished | Retention Rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Full Course** | 1280 | 495 | *39%* |
| **Course Introduction** | 1258 | 1242 | *98%* |
| **Module 1** | 1217 | 868 | *71%* |
| **Module 2** | 973 | 760 | *78%* |
| **Module 3** | 838 | 727 | *87%* |
| **Module 4** | 772 | 667 | *86%* |
| **Module 5** | 734 | 654 | *89%* |
| **Module 6** | 685 | 495 | *72%* |

## SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

Social media was actively used on the course as a tool of discussion and promotion. An official Facebook group (https://www.facebook.com/groups/gamesinschools/) was created which consists of 850 members and is still growing and being used by participants to share resources and ask questions. *#gamescourse* was the official Twitter hashtag and was also used extensively by the course participants with around 700 tweets over the duration of the course.

## PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK ON THE QUALITY OF COURSE

The positive retention rates are reflected in the positive feedback provided by the participants. 99.57% of respondents to the evaluation survey provided a positive feedback to the course. 70% rated the course with the best option of "very good" while 29% gave the course the second highest rating of a "good". There was only one respondent who said the course was "poor".

At a more granular level, the most highly rated elements of the course were the practical ideas for professional practice offered by the course as well as the clarity of the learning objectives.

## REPORTED IMPACT OF THE COURSE

In the evaluation survey participants were asked about how their course participation impacted on their daily classroom practice. Especially notable here is the fact that 73% report that as a result of the course they have tried out a computer game in their classroom which was previously unknown to them. However, as this was clearly one of the key objectives of the course it is therefore unfortunate that 21% report this was not the case for them. Exploring ways how to reduce this statistic should be an objective for a 2nd round of the course, potentially by making the use of a new game mandatory to complete the course.

Nevertheless, the reported impact statistics remain highly positive, indicating that real pedagogical impact was achieved in the classrooms. 87% report they have adapted their teaching method as a result of the course, 61% that they collaborate more regularly with colleagues and 81% that they now use technology more effectively in the classroom.

The course also functioned reasonably well as a promotional tool for the activities of the funding organisation. 43% of participants reported they had consulted the ISFE website since joining the course.

## SUMMARY OF MAIN COURSE ACTIVITIES

At the core of the course was the discussion and sharing of ideas about games in schools. As part of this the participants engaged in very fruitful discussions around topics such as identifying non-educational commercial games that could be used in the classroom as well as how to overcome challenges of using such commercial games (e.g. cost, parent opposition, etc.). A shared Google Document was produced on this topic, covering close to 60 pages of input from participants. The document can be accessed here:
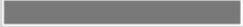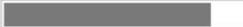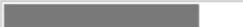
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RVPnew8cW_S3nMSCn75dtWhOHVZPp7JdTiDwEBe6Y QA/edit?usp=sharing. As it is a collaboratively produced document with hundreds of authors it requires further curating and editing but nevertheless highlights the huge engagement of the participants in the topic.

Participants also created a more general league of challenges they faced in using games in their classrooms which is shown below:

## What are the main challenges you face using games in the classroom?

7384 votes on 18 ideas

| Idea | Score [?] | |
|------|-----------|---|
| Lack of technology devices available in the classroom | 72 | |
| Too much focus on assessment in schools making it difficult to integrate games into everyday teaching | 70 | |
| Lack of budget to pay for games | 67 | |
| Lack of integration into national curricula | 63 | |
| Lack of computers in classroom | 63 | |
| Lack of time to experiment with new tools and pedagogies | 61 | |
| Lack of training for teachers | 58 | |
| Lack of internet access in the classroom | 50 | |
| Lack of rules for using students' own devices | 48 | |
| Lack of acceptance from colleagues | 47 | |

### About the Scoring

The score of an idea is the estimated chance that it will win against a randomly chosen idea. For example, a score of 100 means the idea is predicted to win every time and a score of 0 means the idea is predicted to lose every time.

The league offers a nice overview of key challenges faced by the participating teachers in using games in their classrooms. Unsurprisingly, especially given the origin of most participants, availability of devices is a key issue as well as lack of budget to pay for games. However,

equally important to the teachers seem to be the challenges associated with the curricula, in particular the focus on assessment practices which do not take into account the use of games.

Furthermore, lots of ideas were shared on the course about how to gamify learning and hundreds of different educational and non-educational games were shared and discussed about how they could be used effectively in the classroom. As the final activity, the participants developed lesson plans that incorporated the use of a game, taking into account the pedagogical principles introduced for effective use of games in schools. For an example of such a lesson plan see here: http://v.gd/goPbwx

As there were close to 500 lesson plans created as part of this final activity, the collection requires a comprehensive curation to be made accessible and more useful to a second round course audience.

## ISSUES ON THE COURSE

While the participant feedback was highly positive, participants also raised a number of key issues regarding the course which should be taken into account for any future iterations of the course.

Language was the highest ranked issue participants encountered on the course. 25% of participants reported this to be a significant challenge. The large number of comments from participants during the course as well as in the evaluation survey highlight how strongly many participants felt about this issue. There was in particular frustration about the fact that participants did not understand fully the videos and as a result failed some of the quizzes. This resulted in them not being awarded the course certificate. The most common suggestions of how to address this, was by adding subtitles to the videos.

The second highest ranked challenge of the course was the lack of time available to dedicate to the course (24%). This is a common concern raised by teachers throughout European Schoolnet's activities and very difficult to address. While some participants raised the point that the time period before Christmas is especially busy for them, the alternative suggestions for a better time period to run the course again were too diverse to be able to find a more suitable period to run a course that suits teachers in Europe in general. However, in order to accommodate those who found it challenging to complete the course in this period, it is recommended to run the course again in 2015 during the spring period.

Some technical issues were reported (12%) on the course varying from difficulties to play the videos, lack of access to badges and issues with using social media channels such as Facebook or Twitter. In particular the lack of badges caused confusion amongst participants who had completed other Academy courses and were expecting to receive a badge for every module. The lack of badges also meant participants could not make use of the Mozilla Open Badges Backpack feature (http://openbadges.org) and highlight their achievement of completing a module or the full course.

Given the hugely positive reception of the course, it would be a missed opportunity to not run the course again in 2015 and substantially increase its reach and impact. Especially as the initial investment to create a MOOC is always the highest, with subsequent rounds offering a much larger return of investment in regards to participant outreach. This is exemplified by the budget shared with the ISFE via the original proposal in 2014. This budget outlined a cost of €12.050 for running the course again (excluding an evaluation), if run twice per year. While it would be possible to run the course again without any changes at close to this cost, it would be a missed opportunity if such a 2nd round of the course were not to be used to make improvements and adjustments to the course delivery.

EUN would therefore recommend the following improvements should the ISFE wish to run the course again in 2015:

1. **Subtitles**: Creating English subtitles for the videos would address to a significant extent the language issues reported on in the course and would allow more teachers to successfully complete the course. Subtitles were the most commonly demanded feature of participants who struggled with the language.
2. **Network of ambassadors to support teachers at national level**: In order to address the language issue EUN could also utilize for the purposes of the course the expertise of the Future Classroom Ambassadors, innovative teachers appointed by Ministries of Education in 12 European countries. The ambassadors could function as national support points, offering course participants the opportunity to ask questions in their national language as well as promoting the course at national level. Furthermore, the ambassadors could add more nationally relevant expertise and examples to the online discussions.
3. **Badges**: A 2nd round of the course would be required to design a custom set of digital badges for certification purposes. The badges have become an integral part of all Academy courses and the lack of badges on the course meant significant confusion and complaints from participants who had participated in other Academy courses. Furthermore, module retention rates are higher for courses offering module badges and should therefore be included in a 2nd round.
4. **Translations**: While subtitles will partly address the language issue raised on the course, they will not open up the course to participants with very limited English skills, which still applies to a large proportion of the European teacher population. In order to reach this group, a full translation of the subtitles or even the full course content would be recommended, thereby opening up the course to a much larger audience. Such translations would also be very much welcomed by Ministries of Education who could then support and promote the course much more comprehensively.

The following budget is an adaption of the budget included in the original proposal for the Games in Schools course for running the course multiple times per year. It therefore includes the €12.050 from this budget and outlines the full amount required to run the course again and

implement the above-named improvements to the course, excluding the translations. Should there be interest in fully translating the subtitles or even the entire course, a more in-depth discussion is required to determine the exact languages and parameters of such translation.

| Budget for 2nd Round of the Games in Schools course with subtitles, ambassadors and badges | |
| --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Total** |
| Project management | 2,550 € |
| Promotion of course via social media and EUN networks | 1,400 € |
| Moderation/instruction within the course (Coordinator and experts) | 6,000 € |
| Required platform contribution | 3,000 € |
| Badges | 700 € |
| Coordination of Future Classroom Ambassadors as national support contacts for the course | 1,800 € |
| Transcription of videos and creation of subtitles | 5,500 € |
| **TOTAL (non-inclusive of VAT)** | **20,950 €** |

For questions regarding the evaluation and the recommendations for a second round of the course please contact Benjamin Hertz, Benjamin.hertz@eun.org