

# Module 3. Educational games

Educational games were created, within the experiential training methodologies, starting from the assumption "*if I read I forget, if I write I remember, if I do I learn*".

# How to design an educational game

- The first step for designing an educational game is to define the elements that characterize it.
- There are different ways of learning
- Who do I want to teach
- What do I want to teach
- How do I want to teach
- How will I evaluate students
- What will learners need in order to achieve learning objectives?
- What do I need for implementing the scenario

# Ways of learning

- **Acquisition:** (I will transmit / present / explain content to the learners)
- **Imitation** (I will show the learners how to do things related to this subject / content, i.e. I will be a model for them)
- **Discovery** (I will provide the necessary artifacts for the learners to find out / discover a specific concept / knowledge on their own. I will organize guiding activities and provide tips)

- **Participation** (I will organize sessions in which learners will discuss, share and / or collaborate for learning a specific subject / content and I will facilitate the interaction between them)
- **Experimentation** (I will organize activities in which learners will understand, learn how-to, practice, and / or exercise)

# Where did educational games arise?

Educational games were used in the **military field** as simulations, but they spread immediately reaching the **business field** as business games. Then they reached the universities and later also **schools** and educational institutions.

- "Workshop Teaching" takes place in a **shared environment** in which teacher and students interact with each other
- The educational workshop provides an **active personal work** on a particular topic or problem, the creation of cognitive processes, the production of ideas with respect to a given task, the solution of a problem...

# What type of value added?

Educational game aims at stimulating and integrating:

- knowledge
- know-how
- knowing how to be



# What does it mean?

From a methodological point of view, educational games are activities and models (action learning, learning by doing, cooperative and collaborative learning, peer learning) designed in a training program. They're created in order to enable the development of organizations and groups of people and allow them to be the **real protagonists** of the learning process.

## So...

- It is a methodological choice involving teachers and learners
- It is a form of communication
- It is a practice of doing highlighting the centrality of the student
- It is a learning process linking students' activities and teachers' competencies.
- it is a socialization space

The advantage of educational games as a **methodological choice**, compared to traditional training, is the chance to create a "**protected atmosphere**", in which it is possible to learn and teach, even using mistakes as resources!

the development of an educational game can be summarized in 2 points:

- game participants are divided into **teams** who are informed about the **task** they will have to carry out ;
- group **decisions** represent the final product of the internal debate within the group;

# Some examples of games can be:

- **introduction games:** to create a first contact between the participants.
- **warm up games:** to help each participant to enter the group and perform tasks with others.
- **perception games:** to get in touch with others
- **trust games:** to create a certain degree of trust and familiarity in the group
- **cooperative games:** to define a strategy to solve the problem and working together
- **games with bigger teams:** to stimulate the emergence of individual skills within a group
- **adventure games:** to be able to cooperate in stressful and competitive situations
- **reflection games:** to exchange feelings about what has been experienced.

# Designing an educational game

- Games aim at stimulating listening, meant as a perceptive attention to others, using innovative teaching.
- It requires special care in designing the entire training process and in choosing the best context.

Remember: the 5 Ways of Learning

# Basic rules

- Games must be used to achieve a **specific purpose**, not just to spend time;
- Games must be **connected to the subject** of the training, should not be seen as goals themselves;
- Each game can have a **different effect** on each participant, it is therefore essential to consider the target audience;
- **The trainer**, according to his/her own experience, should have the chance to choose the games that s/he finds more appropriate.

# What does it mean?

Key words:

1. Topic
2. Group
3. You, the trainer



The **first rule** when designing an educational game is to think about what topic, theme, issue is addressed, how these should be treated critically and what solutions we want to find...

**FOCUS ON THE TOPIC!**

Another basic rule to design educational games is that they need to be consistent with:

- **internal factors:** the goals of the training path;
- **external factors:** participants and their personal goals.

Remember that the educational games are part of a training pathway designed for a **SPECIFIC GROUP!**

LAST BUT NOT LEAST...Another important rule lies in the **trainer's self-analysis**.

The game should in fact be a tool that the trainer uses to support learners during a training path and this can only happen if the trainer feels comfortable with the used tool.

# Game construction stages

1. Purpose and target identification
2. Game structure and choice of the activities
3. Game materials (for learners and for trainers)
4. Timing of the game

## Games structure and materials:

- Identify the **target**
- Identify the **scenario** (a real life situation adapted for the classroom )
- Define the **roles of participants**
- Choose the **activities** that will take place during the game
- Establish **the rules of the game**

- **Preparation of the materials:**
  - Mandates,
  - Indications for the players,
  - The "script" for the trainer.

## Timing:

- The average duration of a game ranges from 2 to 4 hours
- Each mandate should contain instructions on delivery timing
- In the design phase you should consider a maximum of 30-40 minutes for the start-up, warm up and briefing activities and a maximum of 20-30 minutes for the final debriefing
- Time is a tool used by the trainer

# How to manage a game?

For the successful implementation of an educational game it is appropriate to organize some activities:

- **Start-up**
- **Warm-Up**
- **Briefing**
- **Playing**
- **Debriefing**



# What is the trainers' role?

**During the game the trainer must ...**

- Be prepared on theoretical topics and on the discussions possibly arising from them
- Be prepared to manage groups and to control their dynamics
- Always be able to contextualize the game

# Evaluate effectiveness

The indicators should be chosen according to some basic criteria:

- relevance with respect to the project/intervention;
- being easily quantifiable;
- ability to summarize complex information;
- replicability over time.

Thank you for the attention and now...  
let's play!!!