L120 ODYSSEY: GAMIFICATION OF THE EVALUATIVE PROPOSAL IN AN ART AND NEW MEDIA SUBJECT

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1 INTRODUCTION: GAMIFIED EVALUATION IN AN ART AND NEW MEDIA UNIVERSITY DEGREE PROGRAMME

In this article we will analyze the gamified evaluation proposal developed during 2020 for the subject Laboratory I that belongs to the Degree in Electronic Arts at the Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero (UNTREF). The purpose of this curricular space is to offer a contemporary overview of the electronic arts field, an approach to creative programming and a platform for artistic experimentation. The Bachelor's Degree in Electronic Arts has technology at the heart of its curricular design, both regarding its contents and in its methodologies.

Laboratory I is one of the first courses of the career program that students take once they have passed the Admission Course. Students who started in 2020, when the POSI (Preventive and Obligatory Social Isolation) was in force, had only had the opportunity to take the course in person during the first two weeks of March. In this extraordinary setting, we set out to address the following questions:

- How to design a formative evaluation proposal aimed at assessing artistic processes and productions?
- How to facilitate the initial approach to a project by quickly overcoming the creative block of the blank sheet of paper?
- How can a context of collaborative exchange be created to sustain the motivation of students in the context of a virtual modality?

In this sense, in order to address the questions mentioned above, the final evaluation of the course was based on the proposal *Odisea L120: the virtual experience*; a fictional narrative that, through a system of rules and a digital spread of cards, offered a set of possible elements -visual, sound, material and textual- as inspiration to develop an artistic production. The challenge was that each student, either individually or in a group, could produce an artistic piece or composition based on the articulation of the elements present in the cards and the contents worked at the course. At the same time, each participant had the possibility of requesting collaborations from the rest of their classmates, which would be rewarded through the assignment of extra points.

2 DEVELOPMENT: THE DESIGN OF THE PROPOSAL

The development of this proposal involved a design stage -which was carried out in approximately three weeks- and an implementation stage -which was worked on simultaneously- in order to have the proposal operational in less than four weeks. In the design

stage, the content that would make up the game and the elements that would be put in relation to each other through the card game were developed. In the implementation stage, the technical tools necessary for its operation in a digital format were built up.

The design of the cards was inspired by collectible decks such as *Magic*. Each card consisted of a title, an element - sound, visual or material - and an instruction. The content of the cards was selected in relation to the themes, concepts and dynamics addressed in the course. The visual and sound elements were mainly works mentioned in the classes, records or documentation of some artists' processes, compositional elements used in programming or photographic/sound records connected to a particular lecture. For the material elements, taking into account the context, only those related to the everyday environment were considered: cardboard, cotton, glass, mirror, paper, water, thread, leather, among others. At the same time, these elements were consistent with the dynamics proposed in the laboratory's experimental classes. As for the instructions, the nonsense was taken as the main element; a concept used with the purpose of exploring personal and collective expressivities from a playful point of view. The general guidelines of the game had to do with structuring the fictional narrative and giving a time frame to the proposal. In this regard, a total duration of three weeks was defined, with some non-compulsory partial deliveries with the intention of accompanying the development process of the work. For its part, the game was structured around a system of rules that aimed to delimit the type of production expected and to act as a restraint, so that the activity would not be totally free. The rules were that the production should:

- inhabitate both material and digital territories;
- contain at least some appropriate element;
- have the collaboration of one or more classmates;
- contain a map or diagram that establishes relationships between its components, with the environment and with references to the artistic and/or scientific field;
- and include a text about the process.

In addition, some clues were included in order to avoid the blockage that could be caused by thinking of a production that complied with all the rules.

As Laboratory I is one of the first subjects of the program, one of the concerns of the teaching team was to generate involvement and motivation similar to previous years despite the distance inherent to the virtual modality. Quantitatively, it could be observed that the number of dropouts from one year to another does not differ significantly: in 2019, 8 out of 52 students dropped out (~15.3%); while in 2020, 7 out of 45 students dropped out (~15.5%).

For its part, the implementation of the collaboration system was a success as a proposal to be carried out remotely. In a post-game analysis, the number of interactions carried out was revealed, and it was possible to perceive a network of links within the course and between the two courses.

3 CONCLUSION

In the present work, the analysis of a gamified assessment proposal was developed in which attention to possibility was involved in each of the levels:

1. From the *design stage*, the teaching team delimited the conditions and guidelines on which the game would be carried out, restraining them to a limited range of action;
2. From the *development*, students imagined various ways of articulating the elements of the cards; but in the strategy of the game, they took forward a project involving a particular set of links, and;
3. From the actual *experience* of that year - the contextual conditions, the participants who took part and the particular contents worked on - an initial system of significant materialities that facilitated the imaginary of the evaluative proposal was configured.

Thus, the game becomes an action that generates another action; a unified experience that involves all participants. It could be added that, for a gamification proposal in the educational field to be successful, teachers themselves must also be willing to play; and that implies connecting with desire, working as a team and having fun while developing the proposal. No more and no less than what we expect from our students.

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