

# USING EDUCATIONAL GAMES

## Commentary

### Aim

I would like to share with you my experience of using educational games to stimulate learning. These tips are intended for the Alexander W. Hunziker educational game, 'Top earners'. However, they should also be transferable to most other educational games.

### Selection and timing

*'Only one person can tell you what suits your lesson and when: And that's you!'*

► **Make your choice based on your learning objective:** Every game has a specific aim. Students enjoy a relatively clearly defined experience. One concept or several small concepts can be experienced and discussed with each game.

► **Make your choice based on your experience:** The more you can personally identify with a game, the more you will be able to enthuse and engage your students. Make a spontaneous selection.

Decide on the order. It's up to you whether you play the game first and then deliver the theory, or vice versa. The educational games have been designed to be used both ways. Since often it's about arousing interest and finding a common starting point, I tend to start with the game.

### Evaluation discussion

*'The real challenge lies in leading an open and lively discussion, which results in a specific learning experience.'*

► **Start with open questions:** They stimulate independent thinking and processing of the experience.

My experience: If I ask a question like 'What has that go to do with transaction costs?' too early, I don't get any spontaneous responses from the class. But if I gather all spontaneous responses before asking the question, then not only do I learn more about my students' thinking patterns, I've also encouraged them to think independently.

► **Show an interest in your audience's ideas:** Students will rarely answer the open questions so precisely that the theoretical context is revealed immediately. A number of ideas and theories can be put forward. Show an interest in all responses, even those that don't really fit the concept. Don't make judgements.

My experience: It's rarely the case that I expect a conclusive opinion when evaluating a game. If I welcome unconventional responses as interesting contributions (and as a sign of the individual's personal commitment) and move on to the next response, the atmosphere is still good and nothing is lost in terms of content.

► **React positively to misconceptions:** React in a positive way to wrong answers by making it clear that it's a common error rather than an embarrassing one and that the incorrect response will help the class identify the error as such.

My experience: I truly hope that errors are made. It's demotivating for everyone if the star student gives the right answer immediately and there's no more deliberation. I never go straight to the students I expect will give the 'right' answer because then it wouldn't be worth the others thinking for themselves.

► **Take charge at the end:** Sum up all the key points that the students should take away from the game.

My experience: If I don't summarise all the key points at the end, there's a risk that only the better and more motivated students get the full benefit. The next day the others have perhaps already forgotten what the point of the game was and which principles it highlighted, even if they followed the discussion carefully.

I hope you have a lot of fun and success with the game!

Alexander W. Hunziker