Stansbury, J. (2016) Game on: The impact of game integration into higher education courses (Doctoral Dissertation, Towson University, 2016)

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## Abstract

The three quasi-experimental studies presented in this alternate format dissertation use a social learning framework to explore individuals' perceptions, motivation, and engagement in relationship to learning in higher education courses implementing three different forms of games based integration. Study 1, Virtual Learning Environments in Social Psychology: Using The SIMs3 to teach Self-Related Processes (in press) assessed a four week interactive learning module that used a COTS game to teach concepts about the self to social psychology students. Results revealed that students who played the The SIMs3 demonstrated a significant increase in content knowledge compared to those who engaged in other active learning projects. Interestingly, students who played the game reported lower levels of confidence with course material. Study 2, Meaningful Gamification in an Industrial Organizational Psychology Course (in press), extended Study 1 by creating an active learning environment in an industrial organizational psychology class using meaningful gamification elements. Results revealed that those in the gamified condition showed significantly higher perceptions of learning, engagement, and motivation than those receiving the traditional course. This research suggests that students can learn just as effectively as traditional courses, but have more favorable and positive experiences in the course through more novel, interactive teaching methods. Study 3, Research Methods and the Integration of Create-A-Game Project (under review), built on the previous two studies by assessing the integration of GBL in a research methods in psychology course. This final study extended self-report measures of motivation and engagement from Study 1 and Study 2 and specifically investigated intrinsic motivation and perceived expectations about learning in a non-digital GBL social learning environment. Results reveled that students who created and played games in class performed significantly lower on learning outcomes compared to the traditional course, but they reported higher levels of intrinsic motivation. Additional exploratory findings suggest that individual beliefs and expectations about learning.