THE COLLECTIVE

March 11-13, 2020 | Knoxville, TN

Don't Split the Party: Using Tabletop RPGs to Teach Collaborative Skills

Convenor(s):

Sara Sweeney Bear, Fusion Studio Manager, University Libraries at Virginia Tech
Max Ofsa, 3D Design Studio Manager, The University Libraries at Virginia Tech

Brief Description of Program:

Participate in a mock version of our tabletop RPG workshop where we use the game Weave to teach skills such as collaboration, communication, and creative problem solving. We encourage participation of all attendees. A small group will play the game with us, while the rest will fill the role of "researcher," collecting data about the skills players are practicing. We'll then analyze the data we collect as a group and talk about how games can be used to facilitate connections and teach collaboration skills. We'll also pass on some of the learning objects we've developed.

Tags:

Estimated Session Attendance: 20

NOTES FROM SESSION:

[Coding tool for participants](); [Final workshop "reveal"]()

- Usually given as a pair of much longer sessions (2x 90- or 120-min sessions)
- Uses *Weave*, easy-to-learn & easy-to-play
- Meant to teach "21st century skills" - connected to IL/other soft skills
- Pre-campaign questionnaire about tabletop RPGs/collaborating
  - (IRB approval for VT students/employees)
- Between sessions, participants receive questionnaires/reflection
- Ends with "reveal" that it was a learning game all along!
- Final follow-up questionnaire and data analysis
- Audio is recorded during the sessions, and the audio gets coded by facilitators
- Each table of participants will be focusing on one of three players and coding for them (using the tool above) to determine which skills they are demonstrating

- Setting is an "80s trope town"
- After first session, review of coded data
  - Where were some gaps in the opportunities that were provided to the participants?
  - Participants are told they'll be learning skills through play
  - Coding sessions takes a *lot* of time, but usually sessions are capped at 3 players which helps
- After first session, groups switch which player they're coding for
- Collaboration increases as the session goes on
- Weave is a tarot deck + challenges deck
  - Tarot deck is the "buzzfeed equivalent" of creating a character
  - Game develops based on the things that the participants chose when building their characters
- Difficult to get participants! Students express interest first, then fill out availability, and then times are scheduled around availability
- Aiming for a year of playtesting workshop in order to create a facilitator's packet in order for it to be run more easily
- Working with the game developers in order to make the idea more appropriate for learning environments