

Rejection Letter

Dear authors,

the review process of your submission to *Journal that shall not be Named (JNN)*, "Keeping up with Educational Games" is now complete. I am sad to inform you that our reviewers found severe problems with the article, and we cannot therefore consider it for publication. Below are the reviews, to help you revise the work before re-submitting it to another journal.

On behalf of the editorial team,
Dr. Iye. C. Problems

REVIEWER A:

Evaluation table for ms msID 2531069

My level of confidence in the topic, the method, the type of simulation/game, the literature, and other things needed to provide a useful review:

Low ____ Medium ____ High ____ Very high X

Please use Ns 0, 11 or 222 below

0. Low, unacceptable, poor

11. Fair, average, acceptable

222. High, good, excellent

11 A. Importance of topic

__ B. Aims clearly stated, with logical structure

0 C: Aims fully achieved

0 D. Literature review (incl jrnl JNN)

0 E. Debriefing discussion*

__ F. Quality of ideas, logic, objectivity

__ G. Quality of data

__ H. Quality of method

__ I. Technical aspects, esp stats

__ J. Quality of discussion

0 K. Reliability of results; validity of conclusions

___ L. Organization

___ M. Coherence / balance

___ N. Clarity, concepts, logic

1 P. Quality of writing (Short, simple sentences, paras, topic sentence, good grammar, etc)

___ N. Quality & clarity of visuals

0 P. Significance of contribution to profession/field

0 Q. Results

___ R. _____

* Pls note that authors must discuss debriefing fully and appropriately. A simple mention that they have debriefed with no detail is unacceptable. They should account fully for the debriefing, and put debriefing protocols, materials, etc in an appendix (supporting information).

S. Length (for topic):

Much too long ___ Too long ___ About right **XXX** Too short ___

T. Publication recommendation:

___ 0a. Reject unequivocally (and do not recommend for publication elsewhere).

___ 0b. Good paper, but reject for S&G (and recommend an alternative journal).

XXX 1. Reject in present form, but invite to re-submit at a later date as a completely new paper (see my commentary).

___ 2a. Accept, but require substantial revision in content and/or form (detailed in my commentary), and send back revised version to me for re-evaluation.

___ 2b. Accept on condition that relatively moderate changes in content and/or form (specified in my commentary) are incorporated into a revised version; and possibly send back to me for a brief review/verification.

___ 3a. Accept with minor modifications to substance and/or form (see my commentary); another review by me not necessary.

___ 3b. Accept, but typos and other small formal details to be ironed out.

___ 4. Accept as is.

___ 5. Other (see my remarks).

Open commentary to the authors:

First of all – who are you addressing in the learning process? Your study appears to be addressing schools at some particular level and geography, but not explicit. It should be very clear that whatever is to be learned in preschool is learned in different manners than in high school or higher education.

When extracting data from educational games from the website, their thematic purpose, learning objectives, pedagogical style or intended audience, are not made transparent to the reader or segmented.

Second, the paper seems to draw a straight line between enjoyment, engagement and learning while relying on Koester (2010), which cannot be considered a viable source for any scientific argument. Koester proposes an unsolicited assumption, but without any evidence to back it up. Similarly, Prensky and Gee are both enthusiastic about games and learning, but Prensky was heading a company that sold training games for a living when he authored the source, and Gee (who is a scientist) was making observations of a child in his family.

No critical assessment of this assumed correlation is made.

This is a key problem in your paper as the assumed association of enjoyment and learning is unwarranted. The paper ends up making conclusions about how educational games might benefit from knowledge on how they can be made more enjoyable. While the correlation between the two appears unwarranted, this reviewer fails to see how this has been studied.

Third, “Although game mechanics are believed to influence player enjoyment, there remain many questions about the nature of that influence.” (Page 8). Please look into the taxonomies on intrinsic motivation provided by Malone and Lepper.

Fourth, this reviewer would prefer research questions to be stated earlier than page 9. “Our overarching research question is “what game features (e.g., themes, mechanics, and genres) impact player enjoyment of educational games?””

Fifth, you have some claims that are not backed, e.g. page 17: . Chess is an example of a game that has no theme at all but is nonetheless enjoyed by many players; theme must therefore not be solely responsible for whether or not someone enjoys a game.

Why would chess not have a theme? It is clearly based on a war metaphor.

Sixth, please choose whatever methods, data and result you wish to present and focus on them. It is this reviewer’s impression that all three can be described much more precisely and in less space.

Seventh, you conclude

“Both approaches produced statistically significant results suggesting that themes can play a role in player

enjoyment. However, mechanics and genres were not shown to significantly predict enjoyment. “

Perhaps the paper should focus on presenting an understanding of these significant findings and keep to what can be concluded from them.

To sum up, the paper needs to be focused in terms of

- Analytical object (what is actually being studied and to what purpose)
- Methods (what methods are being used on what data)
- Results (what results are considered important and which are not)
- Review (what sources are reliable to use, and which are not)

The paper needs to be elaborated in terms of

- Arguments for making particular assessments (see chess example)
- Critical assessment of assumptions
- Theoretical foundation

REVIEWER B:

T. Publication recommendation:

X 0a. Reject unequivocally (and do not recommend for publication elsewhere).

Comments for Authors

Thank you for submitting the article for review. The strengths of the article are as follows: (1) overall organization is clear and logical, (2) analytical methods are appropriate for the data, and (3) academic writing is appropriate.

My major criticism is the use of user ratings on a board game site as evidence of "enjoyment", and then connecting that to games in education.

Your literature review presents an argument on educational games and game mechanics, but then looks at data that is not educational and may be specific to a limited group of adults (as you mention in your limitations).

You also need to strengthen the connection of why user rating represent enjoyment. My recommendation is that the article is rejected for publication and that you consider what kinds of questions the data answers before resubmitting to another journal.