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Building the Deck: Creating a Library Card Game for Outreach to Transfer Students (poster)

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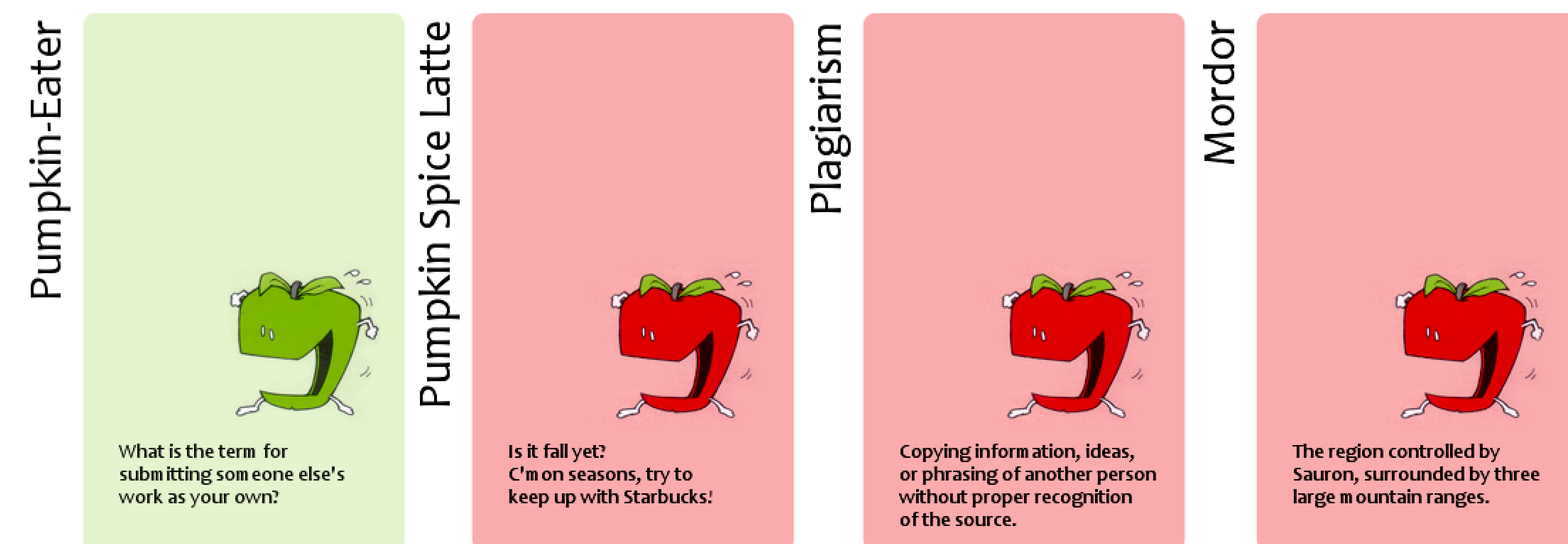
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Building the Deck: Creating a Library Card Game for Outreach to Transfer Students

Development

Every August, James Madison University (JMU) Libraries offers an introduction to the campus library system during transfer student orientation. JMU Libraries has been exploring game-based learning (see McCabe & Wise, 2009; Giles, 2015) and it was hoped that a game could present introductory content in a more engaging manner. A game would also give transfer students an opportunity to socialize and build connections at their new school. Above all, this event was intended to help transfer students feel comfortable in the library.

A card game was selected due to the large number of students expected and lack of computers in the available space. This game, based on the popular party game *Apples to Apples*, was originally developed in 2014 for use at a student employee training event (Evans & Giles, 2015). For the 2015 version of the game, existing cards were revised and content relevant to transfer students was added. Cards were created using the Fruit to Fruit Card Generator (<http://a2a.browndogcomputing.com>).



Implementation

On orientation day, transfer students were greeted as they entered the library and directed to sit in small groups. After a quick introduction, the students began to play. Facilitators circulated around the room to answer questions.

About 50 students attended each of the two sessions. They seemed to enjoy the activity, with lively conversation and laughter during the game. Librarians and staff conducted impromptu consultations for students curious about library services and resources. Some students asked detailed questions inspired by the cards.

Discussion

A card game was well suited to the time, space, and budget limitations for this project. The popularity of *Apples to Apples* meant that little time had to be spent explaining the rules and students were able to help one another with questions about gameplay.

The *Apples to Apples* format worked well for a short session with different groups playing at different paces. The subjective judging allowed students with different knowledge levels to compete against one another. In another setting a game that rewarded the most knowledgeable

player might be more appropriate. Yet for an orientation activity, a game where already knowing the correct answer wasn't required to win seemed a better way to welcome students and help them overcome library anxiety.

References

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- McCabe, J., & Wise, S. (2009). It's all fun and games until someone learns something: Assessing the learning outcomes of two educational games. *Evidence Based Library & Information Practice*, 4(4), 6-23. doi:10.18438/B8FC8M

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