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### Gourmet Gamification: Creating Meaningful Classroom Simulations as a Student Project

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## Abstract

Engaging students and providing meaningful learning experiences that connect to professional contexts is a challenge met in part through the use of simulations and games.

Students from Interactive Media Design (IMD) created interactive learning games for Communication (COMM) and Public Relations (PR) courses.

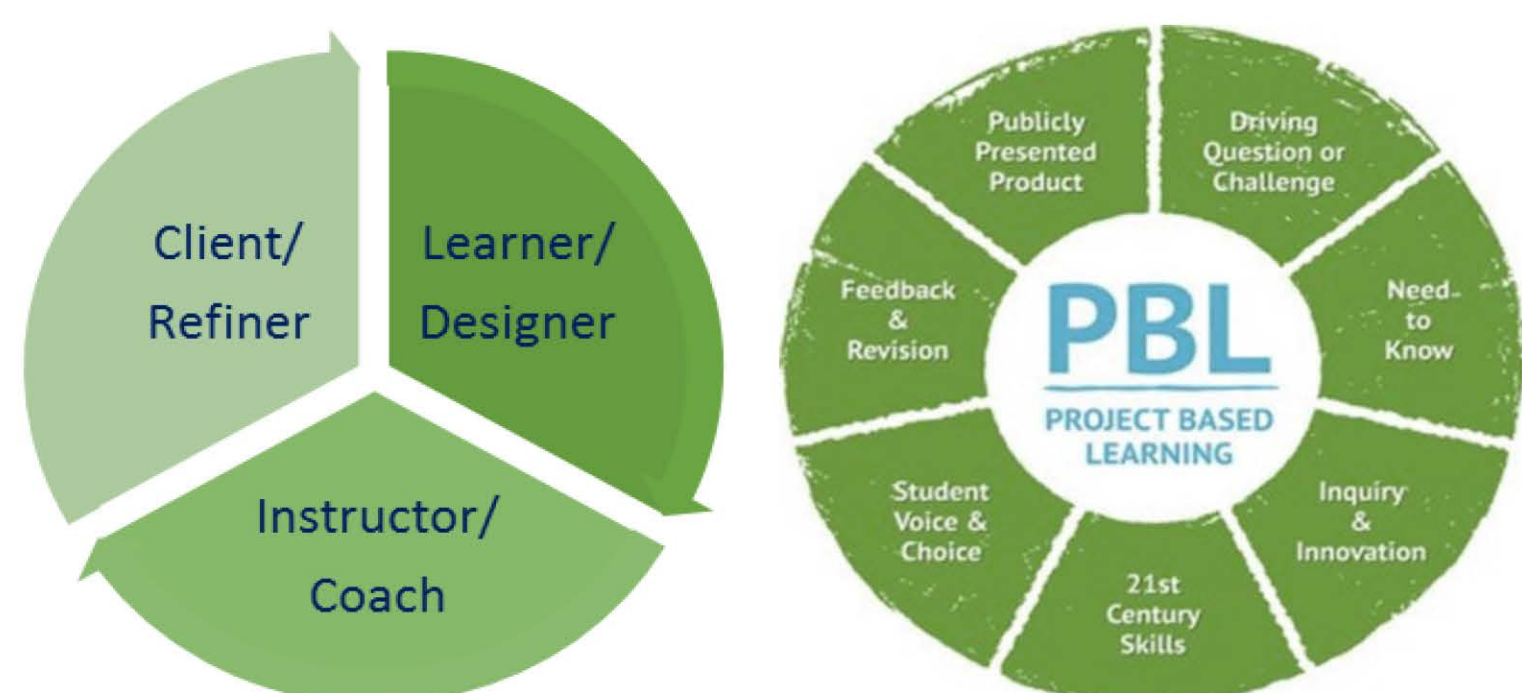


Image: <http://rightquestion.org/education/>

## Terms

- **Gamification:** The use of game elements to improve user experience and engagement.
- **Simulation:** A methodology for understanding the interrelationships among components of a system or process involving conceptual or physical models.
- **Project-based learning (PBL):** instructional approach in which students investigate and respond to a complex question, problem, or challenge.

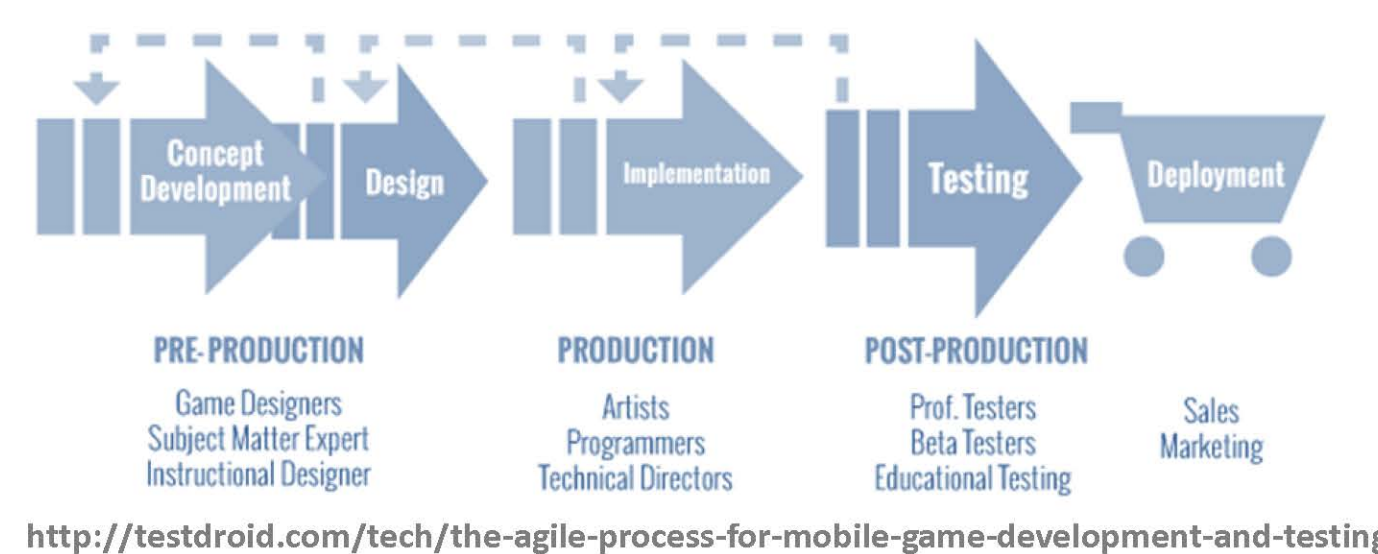
## Challenge



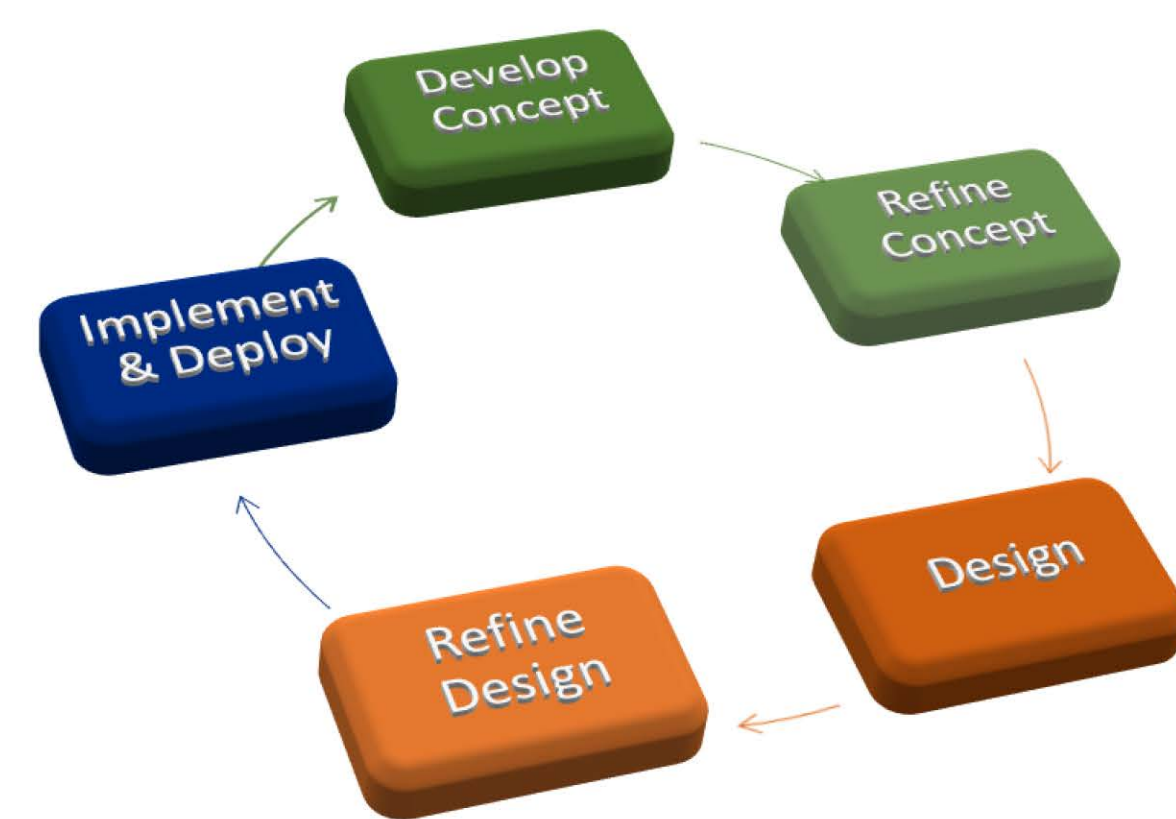
- COMM and PR students needed self-paced support for a complex problem-based assignment (i.e., social media plan).
- IMD students needed a real client seeking an interactive learning media product.

## PBL in IMD

### Commercial Agile Development



### Instructional Agile Development



Develop Concept	Refine Concept	Design	Refine Design	Implement/Deploy
Client/ provides context & requirements	Client/ provides feedback based on needs	*	Client/ Selects product and provides feedback	Client/ applies product. Client's stakeholders use product and assess it
Designers/ build rapport & organize	Designers/ Pitch Concept Rough Draft	Designers/ Create Working Prototype	Designers/ Produce final product & present	*
Instructor/ states learning outcomes & defines assessment	Instructor/ gives feedback based on IMD concepts	Instructor/ coaches on technical challenges	Instructor/ assesses student products and learning	Instructor/ Provides version of final product.

## Student Projects

### Game 1: Social Media Showdown



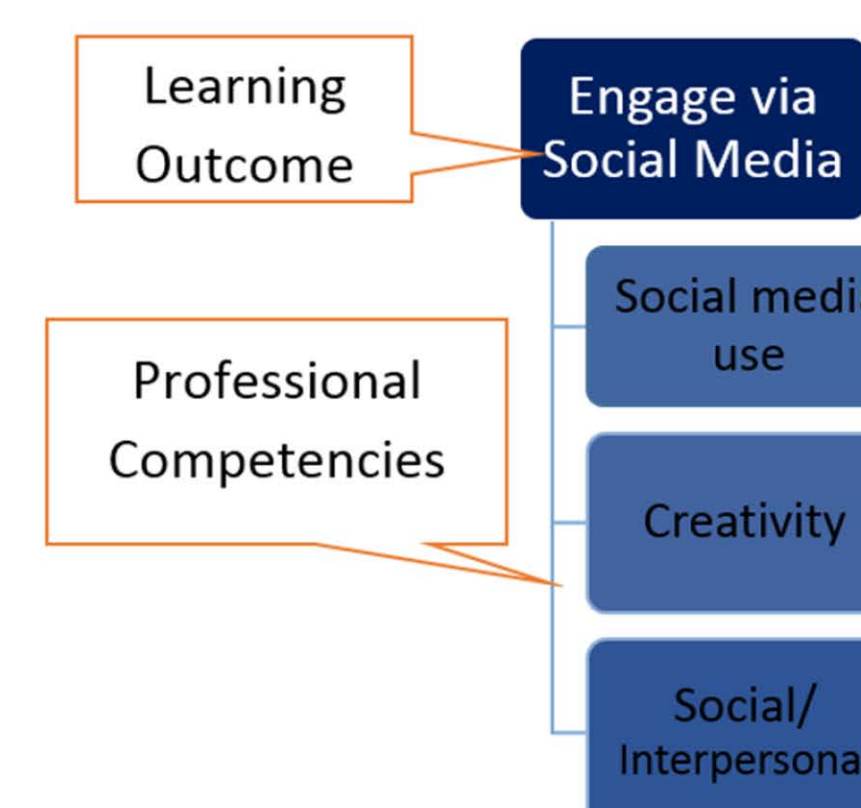
### Game 2: Choose Your Path



### Value for Clients:

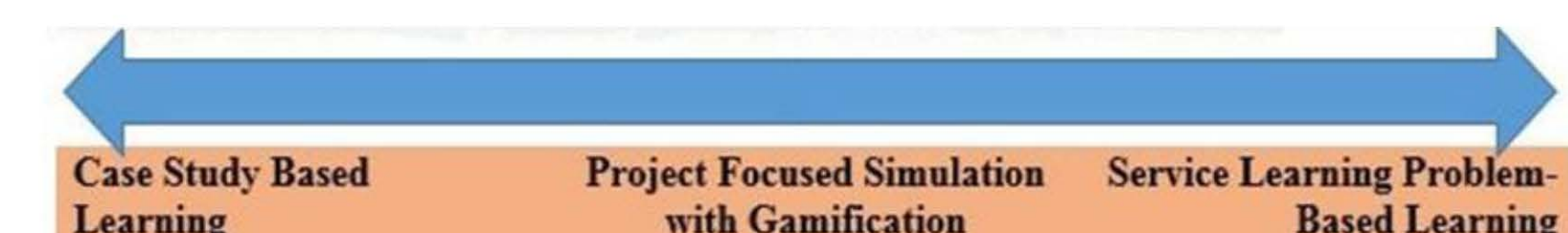
- 1) Cost Savings for Professional Quality Projects (typically hundreds of dollars)
- 2) Provides Creativity Clients Can Build Upon
- 3) Opportunity to Find Good Skilled Employees
- 4) PR/Image Management – Supporting Students

## PBL Simulation with Gamification



- The COMM capstone project is a form of summative evaluation, supporting assessment of learning and skills mastered in the course and program.
- The gamification project supports simulation assignments that require the application of professional competencies, including the use of current social media tools to achieve objectives.
- In the discipline of communication, three approaches for learning activities with a focus on real world contexts and skills are: 1.) case study, 2.) project, and 3.) service learning.

## Three Instructional Approaches for PBL



**Objectivist Approach:** Students analyze the case and propose actions that are assessed by the instructor.

**Objectivist-Constructivist Blended Approach:** Students complete projects, adapting to changes in select elements of the scenario.

**Constructivist:** Students navigate ill-defined problem with real clients.

## Conclusions

- The use of simulation and gamification can bridge the gap between students' current experience levels and increase their self-efficacy with professional roles and responsibilities.
- Students creating interactive media for other students is an effective application of project-based learning.

## Sources

Bell, D. (2014). *Improve Learning Through Game Development*. Poster presented at the International Academic Conference on Meaningful Play, East Lansing, MI.

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