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## **GAMIFYING SOCIAL VALUE MEASUREMENT FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

***Annotation.** this article highlights the societal and entrepreneurial importance and provenance of “social value”. In particular, it explores ways of making social value exciting to business and entrepreneurial students through gamification.*

***Keywords:** playful; gamification; social value; business intelligence; ECG.*

### **Introduction**

The authors have been active in business and social value since 2005 including the think piece “Social Value Today” (Tomlins 2015) working to ensure we pay regard to those things that are most important to life as expressed as far back as 1968:

“Our gross national product now is over \$800 billion a year, but that gross national product – if we judge the United States of America by that ... counts air pollution and cigarette advertising, and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. It counts special locks for our doors and the jails for the people who break them. It counts the destruction of the redwood and the loss of our natural wonder in chaotic sprawl. It counts napalm and counts nuclear warheads and armoured cars for the police to fight the riots in our cities... Yet the gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages... It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion... It measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.” (Kennedy 1968)

However, in 2021 it feels as if we have reached a zeitgeist moment for the currency of these ideas for example with the rise of environmental, social and governance (ESG) stocks (Webb 2021). The challenge? How to make social value exciting for students and in particular business and entrepreneurship students!

### **Gamification as part of a playful educational setting**

Gamification is increasingly used in educational settings to make the hard stuff more fun motivating students to engage (True Education Partnerships 2021). In this sense gamification can sit within a wider playful pedagogy focused on purpose:

“The best moments in our lives are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times. The best moments usually occur if a person’s body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile”. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990: 3)

This is, however, an area of contested definitions and understanding particularly around play and game (Van Turnhout 2016). Despite this contested space, our use of gamification in this context is rooted in our commitment to play in an educational context as a means of enabling creative and exploratory practices for constructing knowledge and skills (Winthrop and McGivney, 2016). More broadly than play, playfulness is about being open to new

experiences, imaginations and ability to explore possibilities (Nørgård *et al* 2017) and we have explored it extensively in entrepreneurial and business development for example through “Sprint” rapid business prototyping (Tomlins *et al* 2020). This article more narrowly focuses on a “gamification” drawing of virtual and physical game techniques to engage learners.

### **The “time” of social value**

“Social value” provides a reflective concept to identify the “worth” of the things that make life worth living above. It’s the value people place on the changes they experience in their lives, in society and the environment. We’re all “customers” of the social value that is offered from a variety of different global, regional and national bodies whilst as educators seeking to generate awareness of agency in social value.

Elkington’s development of the concept of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) is important in this context. TBL is often described as if it is an accounting framework for business embracing three parts: social, environmental (or ecological) and financial. However, Elkington (2018) notes a wider purpose.

“It was supposed to provoke deeper thinking about capitalism and its future, but many early adopters understood the concept as a balancing act, adopting a trade-off mentality.”

Ironically since Elkington’s published self reflection the ESG movement has gathered pace with demand for measurement to demonstrate actions match words (O’ Leary and Valdmanis 2021). The weight of business interest in ESG is persuasive that the “time” has come for social value (Ummuna 2020).

### **Gamification in teaching social value**

The gamification outlined is to enable individuals and organisations to identify an “opportunity space” (Tomlins 1999) to make a difference drawing on a face-to-face exercise from PWC which they granted permission for Coventry University to adapt through a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) online animated game. Teaching was provided on the centrality of social value to the discipline of entrepreneurship as a platform for students to apply this knowledge through gamification, in particular to think about its relevance to business planning and different ways of representation and understanding. This included using monetisation through financial proxies.

Learners play the role of a member of the management team of an American craft beer company that wants to invest in Mexico. It wants to brew in Mexico, it wants to sell in Mexico. The decision about where to source the water from is already made – the water will be sourced locally in Mexico. However, the decision of where to source the cereal from is still to be made.



**Figure 1. Still from the introductory animation**

The management team may import – option 1 for each round of data, or option 2 choose to grow locally. Five rounds were created with participants forced to make a decision on option 1 or 2 relatively quickly to avoid “paralysis by analysis”.

Round one provides a focus on “pure” commercial data to shape the decision to invest in crop production in the USA for or in crop production grown locally in Mexico.



**Figure 2. Still from round 1 animation on narrow commercial considerations**

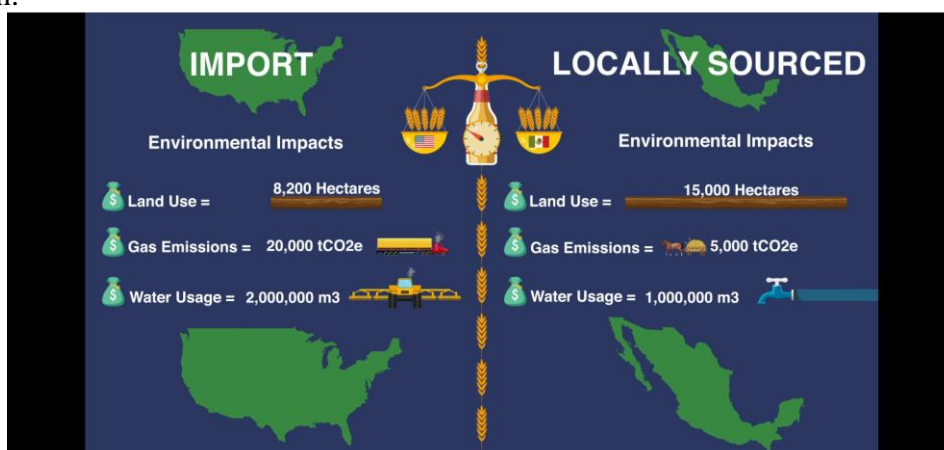
The decision based purely on costs might be to import however some participants nevertheless argue for greater brand value in growing in Mexico. There is no “right answer”, each round examines how entrepreneurs use business information to shape decisions and how to balance impact made in economic, environmental and social terms.

Round 2 introduces a new type of data – indirect economic impact.



**Figure 3. Still from round 2 animation on indirect economic impacts**

Round 3 moves participants away from explicitly financial data to environmental information. They may of course decide that only hard financial data is relevant however the focus on sustainability through the growth of ESG businesses suggests information that warrants consideration.



**Figure 4. Still from round 3 animation on environmental impact**

One of the challenges of Round 3 is that there is no common “currency” for environmental impact with the data expressed above.

In response Round 3b revisits the information and monetises it. This means the information presented now reflects specific financial proxies for environmental effects so that participants can

compare “financial” information with environmental. Impact that is concealed when environmental effects are presented in non-financial terms.



**Figure 5. Still from round 3b monetisation of environmental impact**

The monetisation allows the comparison of “like for like” and accounts for “scarcity value”. Whilst less water is used in Mexico to grow crops the use of financial proxies reveals its greater financial “value” in the local context. It is typically at this stage that participants who have been resolute that the business should “grow locally” are now in a quandary and often see a “greener” and more sustainable business decision to import.

Round 4 “future gazes” at how capital investment can drive environmental and societal change which is very relevant in the context of the rise of ESG stocks.



**Figure 6. Still from the final round of societal change**

## Conclusion

The authors believe that the creation of social value is essential to enable sustainable entrepreneurship and sustainable societies and further that entrepreneurs should seek to identify and grow social value to achieve systemic change. The article demonstrates a gamification to illustrate how entrepreneurs need to engage with social value as part of business intelligence and business planning.

Gamification through the “beer game” specifically demonstrates to participants the way in which non-financial information and social value can shape decision-making. The gamification unlocks the way in which “value” can be looked at and expressed in different ways. It allows participants to explore different options through a lens of entrepreneurial decision-making and provides a platform for engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals.

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