

Business Schools will use Video Games in their Classrooms

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(London, UK)

Do you think you can learn a new job by practising on a video game?

Would you like to learn your job with a computer?

Students at the London School of Economics will be starting an experimental course next season. These students will plan, manage people and solve problems every day in business in an on-line game.

The Federation of British Scientists supports this idea, stating that "games help people learn difficult thinking skills in a fun, easy and stimulating way." Says scientist Roberta Brown, "People are motivated when they can learn in new ways. A lot of students have **failed** with the traditional approach using regular textbooks and written exams, because they are not interested and they don't see how the books apply to real-life situations. This new approach has been very popular because it is

so different and because it is dynamic – it changes all the time and students are challenged to learn new things every day."

The new course is called "Enterprise." Students will sign up for the **on-line** course and become a player in the video game. They start at the first level as an employee of the "Enterprise," and then, as the game progresses, they move up in the company to become management and then finally an Enterprise **CEO** – or boss.

In the game, they are responsible for:

- how much money the company makes
- how happy their employees are
- managing fights and **strikes**
- making sure the company has enough advertising and a good image.

"All of these skills are really important in the business world," says Professor Lee Jones, who is responsible for the class. "It gives the students a chance to try out their business skills. They get to make mistakes and learn from them before they make them in real life."

The university asked several students to try out the game before deciding to offer it as a course. There were some problems at first. For example, the game could not judge the quality of the projects that an employee gave to his boss. To correct this, the game designers asked a business professor to assign points – from zero to ten – based on how good he thought the project was.

"I like this idea," says a teacher who was hired to evaluate the projects. "Now, I get to give my students feedback through the game."

"I love this course!" says Ama Khan, a student who tried out the game for the university. "I feel really motivated to learn. Finally we get to use everything that we learn."

The **mark** that the students get for the course is calculated on how well they do in the game. That means they have no studying to do and no final written exam. Only game results count. Just like in the business world, it is the skills that are important.

Smart

Words

fail = not to succeed

on-line = on the Internet

CEO = Chief Executive Officer or the boss of a company

strike = when employees stop working because they want something from the company

mark = the grade that you get in a course, for example, an "A"