Out of the comfort zone: Increasing social presence through gamification

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Professional Master of Education (PME) in Hibernia College teacher education programmes

- **Face to Face**
  - 55% Primary Education
- **Online**
  - 45% Post Primary Education
Orientation programme

**Week 1**
- Welcome on Board
- Get to know each other
- Find your way around

**Week 2**
- Explore blended learning
- Explore the library

**Saturday**
- Week 2: The courses continue
- Explore reflection and learning
- Build a digital portfolio

**Week 2**
- Learn about assessments
- Stay well during your studies
- Art and cultural change practice
- Week 2: Feedback
Community of Inquiry

Communication Medium
Adapted from Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2000)
Game, game-like activities or game elements
Brigham (2015)
Connect, Learn & Earn (2 minutes)

A key aspect of Orientation is getting to know your peers so we want to encourage you to connect with each other. In your online orientation, you will earn experience or "xp" points every time you complete an action that requires you to connect with another learner. When you earn a specific number of xp points, you will go up a level.

Watch the video below for more information and then explore the Connect, Learn & Earn block on the left-hand side of the Orientation page.

The table below displays the xp point value of certain actions in Orientation activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Point value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forums Viewed</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum Discussion contribution created</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forums Discussion viewing</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum Post created</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum: Some content has been posted</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Viewed (write a blog post)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Viewed (comment on a blog post)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice Viewed</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice: Choice answer added</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary Viewed</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary Entry has been created</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary Entry has been viewed</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perused the gamification plugins on the Moodle plugins directory

Chose Level up! because of the variety of features it offered

What was involved?
- Identifying the Moodle events that would award points
- Devising scoring system
- Branding the block
Switched off leaderboard but sent out motivational blurbs

Activated cheat guard
Quantitative data

Average hits per student

Apr-17  Sep-17  Apr-18  Sep-18
The presence of the Connect, Learn & Earn block motivated me to participate more in the online orientation activities that promoted connecting with my peers.
Qualitative data

What are your thoughts on the Connect, Learn & Earn block?
“I found it to be a good motivational tool and as both a shy and mature student I felt it aided me in pushing me out of my comfort zone.”

“Very good idea, it encouraged me to communicate with people before the onsite orientation day which I probably would not otherwise have done. This helped me to make friends on the day as I had already communicated with them.”

“I think it is a very motivational tool. Seeing the XP points increase gives a sense of achievement and makes me want to do more to see those points increase. It made me interact on discussions and blogs with my fellow students. It is a great motivator to increase interaction!”
"I didn't particularly enjoy it as I felt I was being forced to respond to someone just to earn points or go up a level. I am not one for responding to things or getting involved in a discussion unless I feel I have something important to say."
Next steps
Questions?