ISAGA

International Simulation and Gaming Association
January 2004
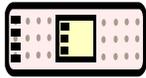
Contents:

Check the calendar of events for Conjoint ISAGA/SAGSAGA Conference in Munich, GERMANY, September.

Operationalizing Simulation and Gaming

An interview with Dr. John Lobuts, The George Washington University, USA

Reflection on Japan Discussion of Operationalizing Simulation and Gaming

With the memory of joint ISAGA/JASAGA conference still reverberating in our minds, the discussions during the first days plenary sessions of operationalizing simulation and gaming and the history of this activity continues to enthrall and promote discussion. A recent conversation with Dr. John Lobuts of the George Washington University captured many of the discussion points made by the speakers at the ISAGA/JASAGA conference. As the reader may recall, more than 150 categories for operationalizing simulation and gaming were noted. Many of these categories could be considered redundant and repetitive, unless, of course, it is your label that is determined to be redundant and repetitive.

To focus the discussion, a presentation of the term operationalize must be discussed so that an understanding of the term is agreed upon. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines operationalize as "a view that the concepts or terms used in *nonanalytic* scientific statements must be definable in terms of identifiable and repeatable" (Merriam-Webster). But American Heritage dictionary uses operationalize as "the view that all theoretical terms in science must be defined only by their procedures or operation" (American Heritage).

Since both dictionaries focus on the term science, understanding of science may help to appreciate what operationalize intends. Again, Merriam-Webster defines science as "such knowledge or such a system of knowledge concerned with the physical world and its phenomena" (Merriam-Webster). To balance our definitions, American Heritage defines science as "the observation, identification, description, experiential, investigation and theoretical explanation of phenomena" (American Heritage). In summary, then, to operationalize one must use terms or concepts that are understandable, repeatable, and provides an explanation of an event through observation, experiential investigation.

Klabbers writes in the January newsletter of board games and computer games. The migration from or inclusion of computer games to board games satisfies the 'game' aspect of the associations name. However, there is strong support for simulation of events without use of board or computer games. It is the concept of simulation to which this reflective piece is focused.

The article captures discusses with Dr. John Lobuts of the George Washington University and revisits his more than 30 years of teaching in the Organizational Behavior field. Dr. Lobuts' involvement with ISAGA dates to 1985 where he met David Crookall. That year Lobuts' paper won most creative paper award at the ABSEL (Association of Business Simulation Experiential Learning) Conference in Honolulu, HI. That same year Crookall and Saunders invited Lobuts to write a chapter on conflict resolution for their book *Communications and Simulations*, 1988.

Despite Lobuts' direct involvement with simulation and gaming through membership and participation at ISAGA and affiliate organizations around the world, Lobuts offers that simulation and gaming, but more importantly, simulation; is part of the education process. As Lobuts begins, "Any good school will point out not all students learn the same and, therefore, try to map to particular learning style." This mapping to a particular learning style can be seen as the foundation of simulation. Having fun in the process can be a gaming adventure.

To focus on a particular learning style, "concrete learner needs to feel. One way to feel is through simulation". A simulated event whereby the actual events expected to take place can be created for the learner to experience in a safe environment is the event of simulation.

Opponents of this learning style question the validity or ability of the educator to map a real world experience in a classroom. This position appears to be supported by dictionary definitions of scientific as requiring repeatability. Repeatability, however, relates in a scientific manner by which we are expecting the results to be the same each and every time the test is run. We would expect, even demand this result if the test is for medical care reasons. For example, we would want to know that medical treatment holds great promise for care of an illness. Despite our need for assurances, not all medical care in with the same results. Not everyone is able to take antibiotics to cure the same illness. This reality appears to hold true for simulations. As Lobuts acknowledges, "… whether any of the simulation and gaming will map to real world experience is left to chance."

This concept of leaving an educational experience to chance is a bit unsettling. However, 'leaving the experience to chance' should not be taken literally.

As educators, chance is always in the offering. Any one in simulation and gaming admits to uncertainty to the outcome of an event. The event itself is the experience. While educators make every attempt to safeguard their students from harm, "from a teacher's perspective, simulation and gaming is the same as the architect who draws and designs a structure. They provide an opportunity to adjust for mistakes" says Lobuts.

An excellent example of where simulation occurs is the instance of educating educators to educate. More simply put, teachers, before acquiring teaching certificates, work in a classroom under the tutelage of an experienced teacher. The practice of teaching is a simulated event, Lobuts argues. The teacher with text knowledge is now afforded the opportunity to build on skills learned in a classroom and take these skills into a real environment. But the student is guided by an experienced teacher. As Lobuts reflects, "For the teacher, simulation and gaming is practice teaching, under guided tutelage. The learning teacher can be coached, matured, and corrected before reaching the real thing."

It's not just teachers who experience this coaching, maturing and correcting before entering the real world. "In medical education it's the cadaver that provides the simulated event where practice helps before cutting into a real human being," Lobuts provides. "Years in education made me realize that what they are really trying to get across is constructing realities to help us learn better what to do with out learning."

Nevertheless, educators measure acquisition of capabilities. Doctors are tested before presentation of medical degrees. Teachers are, likewise, tested prior to earning the certificate to teach. Isn't operationalizing measurement?

Lobuts elaborates that "In all that was printed in simulation and gaming literature and all that I have expressed to this point I have never said a thing about statistics or measurement. In the simulation of building a skyscraper measurement is a must. Building a simulation is as drafting a schematic. Once the architect's (or simulation) schematic is agreed upon, buildings are measuring footage, glass, land -- it can be operationalized or built. However, simulation follows psychology or rather the behavioral sciences. The behavioral sciences never push at the expense of the applied side. Behavioral sciences teach the how side, more than the why? However one way to teach a simulation is to teach the how. Better to practice before becoming involved in the real thing. For example, watch the professional surgeon, the young intern practices on the cadaver, the experienced surgeon guides, then one actually performs his own surgery." It is the teacher, the learner and the cycle continues.

Despite the adventure and excitement of learning in a simulation, can simulations be counter productive? Are there instances where simulations actually do harm rather than good? "Certainly," exclaims Lobuts, "in certain situations. In a classroom, the mentor gradually works the student teacher into the classroom. In an airline, the mentor is helping to guide the student pilot. It is better to make the mistakes while the mentor is

available rather than making mistakes without the mentor help to correct." It appears as though simulations help to avoid potentially devastating occurrences, hopefully!

There is, however, the potential for psychological scarring. As Lobuts explains, "Simulation can have, or be impacted by the simulation." A potential for scarring is always present. "Part of simulation is to help students learn the psychological short coming. That's true with all methods. There is no perfect method. We don't know what is said, only what we think is said, the picture we build in our mind. The restructuring in the student's mind is made explicit in simulation. The student will simulate what they perceived and the output, the manifestation of the student learning is demonstrated in the simulation. Correction can be addressed" by the teacher if needed.

Lobuts reflects on the important work by Elyssabeth Leigh's in facilitation/mentoring of simulation. As Lobuts sums up "Simulation, and all the 'ologies that come from philosophy, makes for complex problems to try to operationalize." If you do delineate, the price may well be to short cut creativity. It becomes a kind of structure for a licensing process. As time progresses, the licensing becomes less structured, maybe even shortsighted. This shortsightedness could be our need as 'gamers' to focus only on board games or computer games, or it could also be a result of pressures from industry to produce more while ignoring quality. The shortsightedness of simulation and gaming may be the topic for the next newsletter issue.

Conference News:

MAKE YOUR RESERVATION FOR ISAGA/SAGSAGA, MUNICH, GERMANY TODAY!

ISAGA 2004 Conference

Bridging the Gap: Transforming Knowledge into Action through Gaming and Simulation

35th Annual Conference of the International Simulation And Gaming Association (ISAGA) and Conjoint Conference of SAGSAGA
6.-10. September 2004
Ludwig Maximilians University
Munich, Germany

ISAGA Steering Committee: 5 and 10 September
SAGSAGA general meeting: 10 September

Contact: isaga2004@sagsaga.org

Preparations continue towards the September conjoint ISAGA/SAGSAGA meeting in Munich, Germany. Conference hosts Willy Kriz, Thomas Eberle, and Mathias Puschert have planned a several days of events, sessions, meetings, in the picturesque city of Munich.

Deadline for papers is 30th April, 2004. Notification of paper acceptance is scheduled for 15th May, 2004. Once your paper is accepted, if any changes or adjustments need to be made, time is allotted for these changes with final paper submissions due 15th June, 2004. Keep track of any changes to this schedule by frequently visiting the ISAGA/SAGSAGA 2004 conference web site at www.sagsaga.org/isaga2004.

When visiting the web site, look at the variety and volume of activities the conference hosts have assembled for a pleasurable and informative visit to the wonderful city of Munich. The section for Venue currently informs the reader of planned events and will shortly alert participants of hotel accommodations.

Trying to focus on the numerous informative sessions that the conjoint sessions promises to deliver, the city itself is filled to the brim with countless historic treasures and a variety of activity. Participants have already begun to register for the conference.   Don't be left out, or pay higher fees from procrastinating beyond the deadline. Set www.sagsaga.org/isaga2004 as a web site favorite so that you can easily review the regular updates made for the conjoint ISAGA/SAGSAGA conference.

See you in Munich!

Affiliate News:

NASAGA

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http://www.icohere.com/replay/conferencelink/replay.htm

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   *  How you will benefit:              *
   *                                   *
   *  -Increase the effectiveness of your training using  *
   *   simulation and interactive games.        *
   *                                   *
   *   -Identify specific practices to increase retention  *
   *   and reduce attrition in both self-paced and live   *
   *   web-based training.                *
   *                                   *
   *   -Connect with leading experts, ask (and answer!)    *
   *   practical questions, and network with other       *
   *   practicing professionals on a unique online       *
   *   playing field.                  *
   *                                   *
   *  -Just experiencing this online conference will     *
   *   broaden your horizons and give you a sense of     *
   *   the interaction that is possible.          *
   *                                   *
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It's all happening at NASAGA Online! v1.0, a three-day worldwide online conference, March 10-12, 2004.

Info and Registration-- http://www.icohere.com/nasaga

The North American Simulation and Gaming Association (NASAGA) and technology partner iCohere Inc. and Sponsor Learning Times, http://www.learningtimes.com are creating this highly interactive unique learning opportunity. It will be a decidedly engaging multiplayer environment that embodies the very subject that it addresses - simulations, games and learning. Are you a player? Won't you join us?
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Register today and save 25% Only $149.00 Click http://www.icohere.com/nasaga

SAGSAGA

ISAGA 2004 Conference (see above)

Contact: isaga2004@sagsaga.org

ISAGA 2004 Summer School
The Art and Science of Simulation and Gaming Design

30. August - 4. September 2004
Ludwig Maximilians University
Munich, Germany
There is a price reduction by 10% for SAGSAGA/ ISAGA Members
Contact: isaga2004@sagsaga.org

SAGSAGA – Cooperation: Simulation and Gaming Platform at Learntec 2004

SAGSAGA in cooperation with Learntec held a Platform for Simulation and Gaming at the Learntec 2004 http://www.learntec.de/ at Karlsruhe on 11. February. There was also a member's meeting. SAGSAGA Members paid a reduced entrance fee of 50 Euro instead of 405 Euro.

There are plans for having the cooperation again in 2005.

There will be a **SAGSAGA Networking Meeting** in Zürich/Switzerland on Friday/ Saturday 14./15. May 2004. It is free of charge for Persons interested in SAGSAGA and its work.

For more Information please contact SAGSAGA website www.sagsaga.org.

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Calendar of Events:

Month	Event	Contact/Website
January		
February		
March	**ABSEL** LAS VEGAS, NV **USA** **24-26 March** **NASAGA** Online **10-12 March**	**Richard Teach** **www.towson.edu/absel/** CPetrane@usi.edu www.icohere.com/nasaga
April		
May		
June		
July	**SAGSET** UCO Campus, ANGERS, **FRANCE** IPSA, ESEO **7-8–9 July**	**Fred Percival** **www.ms.ic.ac.uk/sagset/**
August	**ISAGA 2004 Summer School** The Art and Science of Simulation and Gaming Design Ludwig Maximilians University MUNICH, **GERMANY** **30. August -** **4. September 2004**	**Willy Kriz** **www.sagsaga.org** **isaga2004@sagsaga.org**
September	**35th Annual Conference of** **the International Simulation** **And Gaming Association** **(ISAGA) and Conjoint** **Conference of SAGSAGA** Ludwig Maximilians University MUNICH, **GERMANY** **6.-10. September 2004**	**Willy Kriz** **www.sagsaga.org** isaga2004@sagsaga.org
October		
November		
December		

Newsletter Editors:

Thomas Eberle, office@thomas-eberle.de
Fumitoshi Kato, fk@sfc.keio.ac.jp
Nina McGarry, nmcgarry@gwu.edu

This Newsletter Contributors:

Thomas Eberle
John Lobuts
Charles Saeger, NASAGA