Games for Top Civil Servants:
An Integrated Approach

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In designing De BurgemeesterGame—The Mayor Game—we aimed to develop a game that would be used and appreciated by a target population that was hardly used to being trained and had little affinity with applied gaming: mayors. To make sure that the (learning) goals, the context, the characteristics of the target population, and the creative design were all integrated into the game, we chose to work in a consortium with a focus group. We included engaging elements like simple gameplay based on actual processes, authentic scenarios presented in the way of dilemmas, time pressure, and collaboration. This resulted in a game that was accepted by the target population and has been played by more than half of all mayors in The Netherlands. Mayors feel the game challenges them to explore their decision making during crisis management and stimulates them to discuss this with other mayors.

BACKGROUND

Our consortium consisted of three main partners, covering the three main roles in game design: (1) Domain experts, (2) Educational experts and (3) Game design experts. (1) Domain experts have expertise in the domain for which the game is designed. They can have knowledge about and contacts in the domain (internal expert) or they can be working in the domain (external expert). In our consortium we used both. (2) Educational experts have expertise in defining competencies and in selecting the didactics needed in the game to achieve the learning goals. (3) Game design experts know how to make a game work and involve players. They also have technical knowledge and experience about possibilities to include certain elements into the game, and how. The three partners and the focus group together have the knowledge needed to develop a serious game that will be accepted in the domain, that will support participants to develop themselves in the competencies decided upon and that they like to work with. Collaboratively we went through the design process, each contributing on the basis of their own expertise.

The companies involved in our consortium were:

- *TNO* is an independent research organization whose expertise and research make an important contribution to the competitiveness of companies and organizations, to the economy and to the quality of society as a whole. TNO's unique position can be attributed to its versatility and capacity to integrate this knowledge. We develop knowledge not for its own sake but for practical application. To create new products that make life more pleasant and valu-

Figure 1. Three main roles to develop a successful serious game
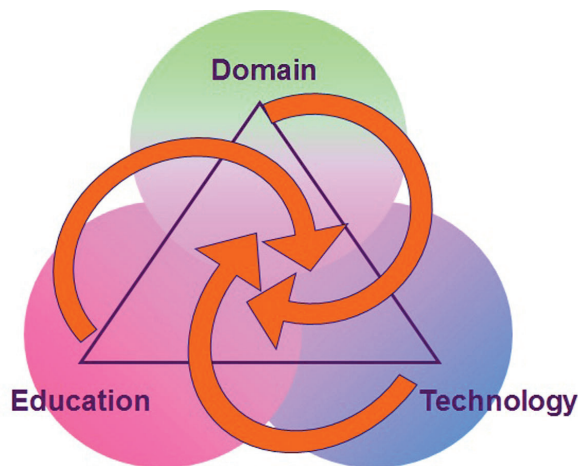
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