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Introducing formats of information:

a Top Trumps style game

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The Background
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- Pilot project – to create a set of cards to trial with a 3rd Year cohort during a project preparation module
- To improve understanding about, and engagement with, different formats
- Student engagement – using different methods of learning to ensure that it's not all listening to me!

Objectives

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- To showcase the range of available formats of information
- To demonstrate that formats have different characteristics (including strengths and weaknesses)
- To stress the importance of evaluating information formats
- To take into account the particular needs of an assignment to help make a decision which format to choose!

Playing the game

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Playing rules which are displayed on a screen. I also demonstrate if I can -

- play in threes
- shuffle the pack and deal the cards until they are all gone
- do not look at the cards

- turn over the top card
- choose a category. Read out the name of the format, the category and score to your team
- compare scores
- the highest score wins the cards

Scenario 1

Last week a newspaper published an item about a new product that's been invented. You are asked to find out reaction to the press release.

Where would you look?

Social media (Twitter, Facebook), industry blogs
Ask friends or colleagues, look in recent newspapers

Scenario 2

You need to find some key words on a topic which you can then use to search for more information. It's not a topic you are familiar with.

Where would you look?

Textbook, lecture notes, Wikipedia

Scenario 3

You need to find current research about a topic and your lecturer suggests looking at journal articles.

Where would you look?

StarPlus (library catalogue), a journal, a database,

Feedback and reflection

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- You might not get the cards right first time
- The game works really well as an ice breaker
- It can take a little while to get everyone playing
- It enables you to walk round the room and talk to students
- It’s fun although it takes a bit of preparation time!

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Feedback from participants

3rd year project preparation workshop

“Really good use of top trump cards”
“Good and informative presentation, with fun tasks and games”
“Scrap the top trumps, other very helpful”
“The game is very interesting”

PGT taster session

“An interesting session with an interactive learning approach”
“The programme was very fun and interactive”

Future thoughts and questions

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- The danger of superficial game playing – fun but no value added
- Will formats be forever typecast?
- Could the game be used as a jumping off point to discuss other topics e.g. publication routes, peer review?
- It’s not perfect but I’ve found it’s a really useful resource to get everyone talking

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Any questions?

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Useful Info

If you would like to see a copy of the template I used please e-mail me – e.stock@sheffield.ac.uk

Format categories –
wiki, patents, social media, handbook / reference book, librarians, database, encyclopedia, newspaper, textbook, conference proceeding, academic journal, standards, maps, website, your lecture notes, search engine, friends, blog, library catalogue, industry magazine, technical report / paper

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Useful Info

Score categories used –

Academic authority
Up-to-date
Ease of use
Subject focus
Fun Factor