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## Law Pedagogy Game: Match-It©

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### **Abstract:**

*Teaching and learning law courses to the non-law students, which is the students from other programmes such as Accounting and Business, can be quite challenging. The reasons are because many of the students found law courses are difficult, boring and unable to relate the relevancy of learning it in their programmes. In order to teach and learn the law more effectively, educators should adopt an interactive teaching style. For this purpose, the researchers decided to combine the concepts of the flashcard and games into the innovative idea, called Match-It. It focuses on to help the students to boost their memory on the law cases and its principles. The students can choose to play this game either by the individual or in the team. They need to match the name of cases with its principles of law or vice versa. It is an innovative way to present knowledge of the law by using an interactive game. Therefore, Match-It will be able to attract the interests of the students and give them a platform to learn the law in a fun way. In producing a valid data and valuable insights on the students' engagement towards this interactive game, the researchers conducted action research under the Law of Contract which is a common chapter in law courses taught for the non-law programmes. The outcome of this research will be able to contribute to the existing knowledge on improving the teaching style used in the classroom.*

**Keywords:** Law pedagogy, educational games, innovation, interactive teaching

## 1. Introduction

Regardless of many decades of research, we still experience a lack of appropriate and exciting contents that would engage the students and improve the learning process (Naz & Murad, 2017). Non-law students who are the students from other programs like Accounting and Business found law courses are challenging and boring. They also complain that there were so many legal cases and its principles that they were unable to relate the relevancy of learning it. That is the reason why the researchers have invented Match-It, an innovative educational card game for the law course.

Learning with the card game has been widely adopted and proved effective for the students' learning process. It is known as an active learning approach which can increase the students' engagement through playing a game. Our main goal when creating Match-It was to create a law pedagogy game that would be challenging and interesting to play, at the same time require strategic thinking, and also to enhance the students' understanding about legal cases and its principles under the chapter of Contract Law.

## 2. Literature Review

Law has always been taught with theories, principles and applications. There are two well-known law pedagogies in a lecture, known as Socratic method and case method (Bautista, 2014; Pasley & Yoder, 2016; Krook, 2017). The Socratic method is a system of asking a series of questions to a student on a particular case of law or legal principles. While, the case method or also known as the casebook method is a way to systematize and simplify legal education by focusing on the previous legal cases (Hyland & Kilcommins, 2009). Thus, it shows that the law lecture is a teacher oriented. During the lecture, the educator will be presenting the knowledge, and engaging with the students by using the two said methods. These methods obviously dry, repetitive, and boring as found by Pasley & Yoder (2016).

Many scholars such as Jones, Swan & Turner (2010), Lee (2012) and Naz & Murad (2017) urged the educator to teach the law courses to the non-law students using the innovative teaching methods. This is because the current learning style has shifted to the student-centered learning. Among the innovative teaching methods, game-based learning has been

widely adopted by many fields other than law. It allows the students to explore the content in a captivated environment (Zapeda, 2018), thus able to increase the student engagement and attract their interest in learning the course.

### 3. How to Play

Match-It is an educational card game that consists of two types of cards, the cases cards, and principles cards. This game also provided answer sheets that list down all the correct matches between these two cards as the guidelines to the players. In addition to that, there is a prisoner card. While the number of the cards play sets the level of difficulty. It starts with 10 (easy), 30 (medium) and 50 (difficult).

There are several ways to play this game, either by an individual or by group settings.

#### 3.1. Individual Setting

This setting is suitable for self-revision. First, place all the cases cards (face up) on the table or flat surface. Second, matches the principles cards to the cases cards. When the player has finished matching the cards, check with the answer sheets. The player can choose either to match the cases with its principles or vice versa.

Another way to play in the individual setting is to mix all cases and principles cards (face down) on the table or flat surface. After that, the player flips up a maximum of two cards at one time over each turn. If the cards are the correct pair, the player can discard the cards. If the cards are not the correct pair, the player must turn the cards face down again. When the last pair of the cards have been picked up by the player, the game ends. This game requires high concentration from the player. To make it more interesting, this way of playing also can be used in the group setting where the winner is the person with the most pairs.

#### 3.2. Group Setting

It involves a minimum of two players or two groups (each group has two to four players). The players can choose to play in casual mode or competitive mode.

##### 3.2.1. Casual Mode

The players shuffle the cases cards and principles cards together with a prisoner card, then divide the cards, minimum five cards to each player. The concept of this mode is similar to playing Old Maid card game. Each round, the player can choose 3 actions. First, to pick a card from the other player. Second, to pick a new card from the deck. Third, to match the cards in his hands and keep it (face up) in their 'bank'. Here, the other player must check whether the matches cards are correct or not. If the player can match the cards correctly, he can keep those cards. However, if he wrongly matched the cards, he must discard the cards back to the deck. Whoever has the most cards in the 'bank' wins the game.

Another way to play in casual mode is to use the principles cards in Bingo, the game of chance. Each of the group is given five minutes to draw a table (5x5) and fill in the numbers randomly. Each round, the educators will pick the principles cards randomly and ask the group, one by one in a time, to state the correct name cards. If that group can answer it correctly, they can mark the number they choose. Repeat these steps until the Bingo pattern is complete. Whichever group that complete that pattern and yell 'Bingo!' first, win the game.

Other than that, educators can use the cards in the Hangman game. The educator can pick any cards from cases cards as the secret cards/words and divide it equally to each group. All the groups will take the turn to be the host. The host then draws the blank line for each letter of the word on the whiteboard. Then, the players from other groups guess the letters, one at a time to figure out the secret word. Whenever the players guess a correct letter in the secret word, the host fills it into the blank. Nevertheless, if the players guess a wrong letter, they get a strike that brings them closer to losing. The host draws a simple figure of a hangman, one line by one line until it becomes a complete figure. Once it becomes a complete figure of a hangman, the players have lost the game. The players get 1 point for each correct letter and 10 points when they guess the correct secret word. Repeat these steps until all the groups completed their turns and rounds. By the end of the game, which group has the highest points win the game.

##### 3.2.2. Competitive Mode

In this mode, the concept is to read and grab. The cases card will be the 'grabbing' cards, while the principles cards will be the 'reading' cards. In addition to this mode, it necessary to have at least one reader. This person will read the 'reading' cards to the players. The reader must have a clear speaking voice and not bias.

After shuffling the 'grabbing' cards, the reader will divide the cards equally to each player. The players will flip over their cards so that the cards are face up and then arrange the cards in maximum three roughly equal rows. Each player has 15 to 20 minutes to memorize the position of the 'grabbing' cards in their territory and the opponent's territory. At the same time, the reader should shuffle the 'reading' cards and place it face down next to him. When the memorizing time is up, the game will start. First, the reader picks up the top 'reading' card and then read it loudly and clearly. That card is then discarded. Second, once the reader has stated what was on the reading card, the players have to find the correct 'grabbing' card. Whoever touch or grab the correct card first will get the point. He can keep that card next to him. One card is worth one point. If a player grabbed a wrong card, he forfeits his next turn. He must place his hands on his head as the next turn commences. The reader can only continue with the game after the player has touched the card. The game will continue by repeating all of these steps until all the 'reading' cards are discarded, and the players recover 'grabbing' cards. Whoever with the most cards at the end wins the game.

#### 4. Method

The researchers conducted a study in an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of an educational card game we developed, Match-It, for learning legal cases in the chapter of Contract Law. The method used to test Match-It is through 'action research'. According to (Mills, 2018) and (Johnson, 2012), 'action research' is a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by educators in the classroom to observe their practices. (Ferrance, 2000) further explained in her book that 'action research' is not about learning why we do certain things, but rather how we can do things better. In brief, 'action research' helps the educators to improve their teaching styles and at the same time, reinforce the learning process by the students.

The researchers conducted a traditional lecture method (teacher-centered) at first in the chapter of Contract Law to Accounting and Business students. The researchers took notes on the observation. After that, the researchers introduced Match-It to the students. The research questions were asked, such as does learn through a playing card game, Match-It improve the students' engagement in the classroom, and develop a better understanding of legal cases and its principles under this chapter? The observation and feedbacks from the students were recorded to improve Match-It.

There are only 75 students who voluntarily to be part of this study. Thus, this number is unable to perceive the real and overall view of other non-law students in Malaysia. Yet, this small-scale research is still able to obtain valuable insights for the purpose of this study.

#### 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The result of this project shows that the students were drowsing and disinterested in the traditional lecture of Contract Law. Generally, the law course itself often considered a difficult and challenging course for non-law students to learn. In improving students' understanding and increase their interests, the researchers believe that an alternative and innovative method that is more interactive and student-centered is needed. Previous research in other fields has revealed that card games can be a useful teaching and learning tool and play an essential role in the whole teaching-learning process (Schneider, et al., 2012). This is the reason why the researchers found that it is necessary to implement the same idea and concept in teaching law to the non-law students.

After the introduction of Match-It, the students felt the law course was much more interesting than the traditional didactic lecture. All of the students had positive experiences toward the game. In the feedback collected from the students, the researchers found similar answers and thus categorized them in into Figure 1 shows that majority of the students (24 out of 75 students) agree that the card games can help them in improving their knowledge and at the same time, memorizing the cases (32%). 19 (25%) of the students believe that with card games they can have better understanding of the legal cases and its principles. Another 19 (25%) of the students think that the card games make the law course interesting and fun to learn. Only 18% consider that the card games can be helpful in self and group revision.

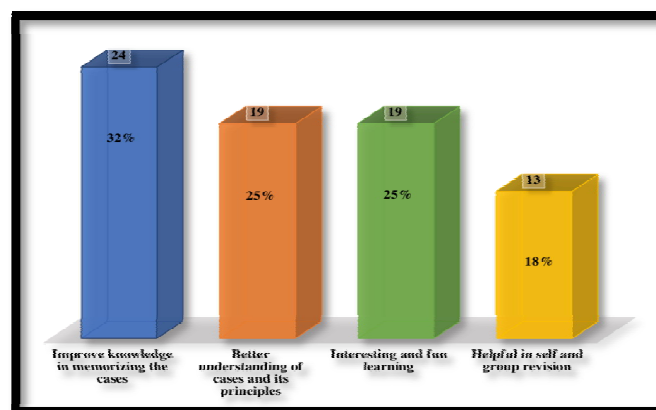


Figure 1: Feedback from the Students on the Match-It

This finding is substantial evidence that the educational card game, Match-It has the potential to facilitate students' learning. Even though extensive research in other variety of disciplines was done on the importance of play, it was focused on the children only. However, children and adults alike do play and learn from play (Su, Cheng, & Lin, 2014). Therefore, the researchers believe that the value of play and games in higher education should not be underrated. In summary, Match-It is unique as it can help students to learn the law effectively in an interactive way. Since this game can be played either by the individual or by the team, it enables the students to choose which method is deemed to be suitable to fit their learning style. Based on the observation and research, none of the sellers in the market is selling this kind of product. The researchers hope that Match-It can be benefitted widely to the educators and the students.

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