Chapter Review  
The Theory of Fun and Games : Chapter 7: The Problem With Learning  
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First of all, I really liked the style of this book. It was full of interesting concepts but presented in a fun, easy to read format. So far, this is the chapter I have most enjoyed reading. The section on cheating made a big impression on me. I agree that many players are not just willing to cheat but I would propose that they actively seek for ways to cheat and expect to be able to do so. In fact, in some of our interviews with kids on some of the games we have developed kids ask if there are cheats built into the game. In some games, cheating has become an integral part of the mechanics.

Despite this we must be careful to not let the concept get out of hand. With learning games, he whole point is to teach concepts. Quoting the author “Cheating may not prepare us correctly.” If we add cheating into a game it might backfire and allow the gameplay to skirt important data or concepts. With the numbers of games employing cheats I am sure that this “survival” skill is being well supported.

We can employ the “cheat” mechanic but we should not rely on it.

I was also intrigued with the author’s claim that with games “...you don’t get to change the physics of the game.” I say, why not? I think if you are teaching physics, the ability to change the physics of the game would be an interesting possibility. It reminds me of a cheat that players discovered in one of those first person shooter games. Players were able to jump past several levels by pointing their gun at the ground and firing. A bug in the physics of the game propelled the player vertically over intended obstacles. Not planned by the game developers but pretty cool nonetheless.

I will certainly use the successful game elements checklist during future game development.