

Tips for using games and experiments

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Tip 1: Make the payoffs relatable

Try to make the hypothetical payoffs similar in size to those that students commonly experience in everyday transactions i.e. £5, £10 and £20. People tend to learn more effectively when they can relate new knowledge to experiences from the real world. Sweets/chocolates or even cash prizes for the best performing or randomly selected participants can also help to keep the class engaged.

Tip 2: Ask for volunteers to save time

With paper-based games, the in-class costs of collecting decisions, calculating payoffs and communicating results can sometimes impose considerable demands on the tutor. To reduce these costs ask the class for volunteers to help with the running of the game. Students who played the games in previous years are also usually willing to come and assist.

Tip 3: Practice before trying in class

A good way to learn how an online game works is to set yourself up as the instructor on a laptop/desktop and as separate players on your phone and a tablet. After playing a few rounds, it will become much clearer how the game works from both the perspective of the tutor and the students. This typically takes less than 10 minutes.

Tip 4: Find ways to assign unique logins

Raffle tickets are a useful way of providing participants with a unique login number required for some of the online games.

Tip 5: Get the students to play in pairs or groups

With both paper-based and online games, get the students to make decisions in pairs or small groups. This makes it easier to play with larger numbers and facilitates discussion and peer learning.

Tip 6: Add follow-up work to maximise learning

The learning benefits from using the games are maximised when the students have to do some follow-up work with the results. In some cases, they can be fully integrated into the module assessment i.e. referred to in exam questions or coursework assignments.

