![TeachBLUE! logo]

Blue Mission

Trainer's Guide

A TeachBlue Erasmus+ Project Game

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Erasmus+

EU programme for education, training, youth and sport

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TeachBLUE!

Consortium of the project:

The project involves universities, research Institutes and non-governmental organizations from 4 European Union countries - Poland, Greece, Cyprus and Portugal.

Project coordinator:

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INTRODUCTION

This document is addressed to the **teachers and educators**, who will be **using this game as a tool** to enhance the understanding of the **importance of marine literacy.**

It aims to explain the **concepts behind the game's rules**, and provide insight and practical advice on its uses within this framework.

With this guide we would like to explain what is **important during playing** and **what the trainer should take into account** by preparing the game, playing, and reflecting.

Getting Ready

Before playing for the first time, a small amount of **preparation** is necessary, so that the trainer can be accustomed to the **game's components and concepts.**

01 **Firstly,** download and print the **game's token and card files**, in single-page printing.

02 Print the game board using the A4 cut-outs, and join them using tape, clippers or other items. Files for professional printing are also available.

- Please take note that we recommend printing the cards in good print quality; we also advise you to check your printer's ink levels to ensure the best visibility of all elements and increase your enjoyment of our game.

03 Then, cut the components carefully using their outline, or the cut guide symbols.

- For sturdier card set-up, we recommend that board game sleeves and cards are used; any game store selling market-popular card games will be able to accommodate the needs in sleeves, and often they can supply cards they do not need that can be used as supporting structure, otherwise any playing card would do (the cards have been designed for card/sleeve size: 63,5*88mm).
- Should a better print/cut quality be needed, many medium and large printing companies offer to print and machine-cut the A4-paper cards at negligible total costs.
- If you prefer, you can print the cards in sticker paper and use waste material such as cereal boxes as a base to stick the cards on.
- As a last resort, we recommend printing the cards on thicker paper, although simple A4 would do.

04 Finally, cut the tokens carefully; we recommend that they are either printed in hard-paper, or sticker paper and subsequently stuck on a sturdier material (we recommend using material that would be trashed, such as cereal boxes, cartons etc).

After doing the preparatory steps, the trainer will proceed to read the game's rules, and watch the short how-to-play video. We recommend that the rulebook is read first, followed by the video which will clarify the way of play via example.

Educational Aspect & Trainer's Role

The game steers away from the majority of simple games created in educational context; it promotes critical thinking and rationalization, utilizing the educator to provide prompts to the user, instead of long texts that more often than not cause loss of interest in the topic. It promotes collaboration, as a crucial part of early personal development, embedded within the game's rules.

The game contains two decks of cards; one for the players, and one for the game master (educator). The game's mechanics themselves are woven to be very simple, matching the age of the younger learner, however the complexity of the game increases according to the will of the Game Master to accommodate greater age groups.

The main objective of the game is to find the hidden "Ocean Treasure", which can be "translated" into incorporating an important lesson by the educator. This searching process is the tool via which the educator will pass on the knowledge and understanding necessary for their module.

Player Cards

These cards are the cards the learners will be using. They provide the learner with options to activate the game's protagonists on their board. Each protagonist (Character) has a specific set of actions, indicated on the card the players hold.
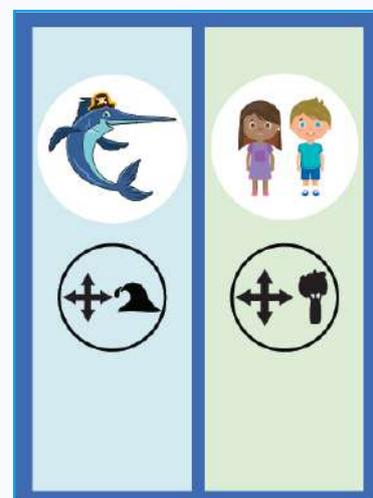
Event cards

These cards serve the purpose of randomizing the location of the game's "treasure", and are of immense help to educators not yet versed in utilizing board games as tools. However, experienced Trainers can opt to not use them, or modify their use.

The Board

The earth and its oceans have been the basis of our game board. It is split into areas, which are useful to the game. However, should the educator wish, they can substitute this board's map with a map of their own and still use the same rules and cards.
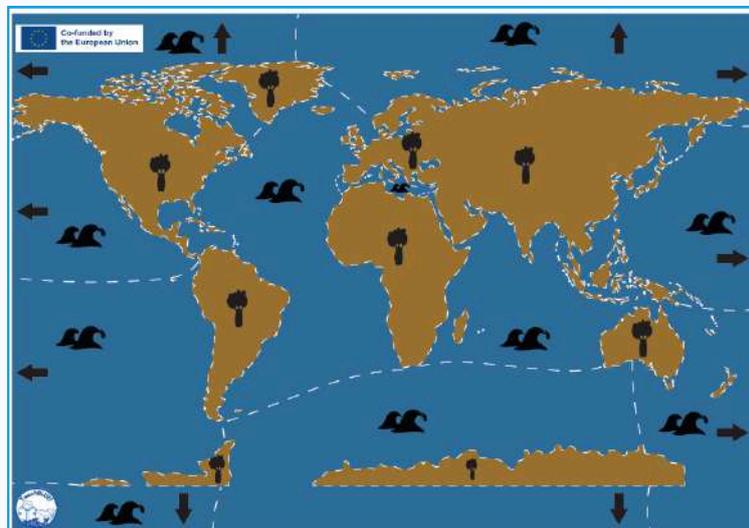
Character Tokens

They represent the location of the characters in the world, and are the "pawns" the players move. The educators are encouraged to substitute these paper tokens with relevant 3D items in their possession, for player immersion.

The Trainer's Role

◆ The **trainer** is a **crucial part** of the **educational process** of this game-tool; as it is meant to be used in the **context of education**, a **versed trainer** is at the **heart of the game**, instigating discussions and **managing its flow.**

◆ The **trainer will:**
- **Dictate the pace** (faster or slower);
- **Ask further questions** on the combination of played cards if needed;
- **Help the players with prompts** in order to aid them in processing the cards' information and help making a wiser decision;
- **Pointing out facts and promote learning** based on the developments;
- **Modify the base game rules** to better accommodate their needs;
- **Simplify** or **enhance** the rule-set;
- **Create new cards** to be used within the game.

◆ The game is designed to offer a **fun and engaging time** for the participants, allowing them to experience an **actual game** while at the same time leading to learning;

◆ However, **the trainer is the key to promote the educational aspec**t and elevate the game to its true potential as a tool.

Further steps

The next part offers modifications or advice for the trainer, so that they can unlock the game-tool's full potential and modify it according to their educational needs, and the needs of their group.

We recommend that the next part is read after the first test-playthrough.

Advanced Trainer's Guide

The next part of this document contains **two parts:**
- **simple practical advice** for the trainer,
- **alternate game modes** and rules modifications.

Practical advice

This part of the Guide is common advice given to all games created by the participation of Dracon RDS, as they reflect general topics that must be mentioned.

During the course of the game, it is easy for the players to lose themselves in the moment as they enjoy their participation. The trainer should be present to monitor the group's progress, and keep them on track of the educational aspect of the game.

Clean components and venue

This may seem obvious, but the game components should be kept in a neat and tidy way, to be inviting to the players and offer them a good participating experience. The venue should also have good acoustics and ample light, and the space should allow "round" sitting allocation with a playing surface in the middle.

Know the rules

Prior to initiating the game with the learners, the trainer should ensure they know the rules themselves and are acquainted with the game's components. In the opposite case, loss of interest will be incurred to the participants.

Keep the group on track

Provide prompts, nods or quick comments frequently to help the group stay on track. For example, quick questions like:
👉 "how does this card help your personal growth and could lead to the card you selected to add to your deck",remind the players to promote the well-being topics and understand the connections between the different practices they could employ.

Keep the group motivated

Remind the players of their need to pay attention to the active players and check their turn; the game aims to promote collaboration, so the trainer should verbally invite the players to help out and/or ask for help during the course of the game.

Feel your group's "vibe"

Not all people enjoy the same kind of games. Some would prefer more discussion, others more strategy, others more fun. Always know your group, and modify the game to their needs; examples of alternate modes can be found later on in this document.

Don't be afraid of change

The game is a tool more than a game. Do not be afraid to break its rules, to better serve your purposes. If a rule does not suit you, or hinders your progress, change it!

Alpha

Cooperative games often have the side-effect that a vivid persona is more represented and assumes a leadership role. It would be best to avoid such practices by reminding the players that they should make a basic effort to talk about their cards and explain why they choose them.

Team-Building

Allow groups of learners to mingle and play as groups. Each group can be one "player" as can be seen in the game's rules. Each group will have to discuss and collectively decide their action. Promote team-building by allowing friends to be together, and ensuring no-one is left behind. Promote in-team collaboration and equal speech, ensuring no player is overshadowed.

Alternate Game Modes

The game can be altered in many ways regarding its gameplay, so that it can serve the trainer's and the group's needs. Herein are some examples of alternate game modes, which can be used as they are presented, or serve as sparks to the trainer's creativity.

Custom Difficulty

The trainer may decide to alter aspects of the game, to make it more difficult or easy, depending on their group. The game has been set into what the project team considers a fair difficulty, and the rules are built around that. These are ways that the trainer can modify the challenge:

- Reduce difficulty:
  - Provide help towards the location of the Treasure (easier riddles or direct answers)
  - Draw more Game Master cards and choose ones that help the players
  - Actively position the hidden Treasure closer to the players.
- Increase difficulty:
  - Create a map with more divisions
  - Allow randomness in movement, or control the movement of the Treasure by selecting the card you wish from the deck.

Fixed Cards

The trainer may decide they want one, any or all decks of cards to be set in a specific way. Trainers will find this useful especially for the Events deck of cards. There are two ways this could be implemented; "Pre-Setting" and "Controlled".

Pre-Setting
The trainer will set the decks of cards before the game in the order they wish, and instruct the players to not shuffle them.
Controlled
The trainer keeps all decks of cards by them, and will allocate the cards they wish to the players, choosing instead of drawing from the top.

Mot(ivat)ion

Some groups prefer more energetic games, where they would be able to also expend physical energy. Including rules such as "while explaining your cards' connections, you must walk around the group, and you must finish and sit at the same time".

Babel

In modern multicultural environments, it is easy for people to feel uncomfortable when being unable to speak comfortably in a foreign language. Allow them the window to express themselves in a language they are comfortable with and the help of their friends in translation.

To gamify this experience, ask the players not speaking this language (before the translation) to guess what has been said by the tone, cards and gestures.

Doomsday Clock

End the game early, when the player cards finish, or after you reshuffle the deck once. This will influence the difficulty (depending on whether the trainer claims that the "Treasure" is lost or is magically found at the players' feet when the cards are done).

Stress Galore

Depending on your group, they may be motivated more if they feel the "threat" of the Pirate getting closer to the treasure, or they may feel uncomfortable due to their young age; use the Pirate character in a way that will suit your group and ensure their fun and engagement.

Role Playing

Introduce into your game a fun and engaging way to represent the characters: speak in voices! Be the actor the learners will enjoy watching. A prime chance to do so is during the "Ask for Information" or "Search" actions.

Fate Weaver

Choose the way the Treasure behaves, ignoring the trainer's deck. This is very useful for educators wishing to increase or decrease the difficulty or the duration of the game. However, we recommend that you make it in a way that the players do not feel cheated, such as removing a relevant card from the deck.

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