Patch 35 – the Ghost of Questions Not Asked

This was an interesting patch. I kept wondering, what questions are you (Terry Greene, the author of this patch) asking in your front end analysis? Clearly there were some questions about audience that he didn’t consider. It made me think of the TED Talk from Anthony Jack “On Diversity: Access Ain’t Inclusion”, and how there are so many assumptions made about who has access, who is included…and how our systems work.

The section that really resonated with me was where the described “the look one student gave me when he realized I was trying to trick him into playing along.” My first thought: why on *earth* would you try to ‘trick’ someone into playing your game? If this is an underprivileged group as the author implied, I can see students being offended by the apparent trivializing of an issue they may already be familiar with, or, alternatively, that might not seem all that relevant to them; to then have your teacher try to trick you into taking part just adds insult to injury.

That said, it’s a really good learning about assumptions, and its something we only really learn by doing it ‘wrong’ first, so we can do it ‘right’ later. I have started doing dialogue a lot more than I used to; talk to the people you’ll be working with to find out what the best fit might be for them. Ask them what works for them and what doesn’t. Include the learners in the decision-making process; let them decide how they want to show their learning, whether its through a game or whether its through a discussion or a written piece. Giving people more agency in how to approach a project tends to make them more invested. Now they’re not being forced into something (or tricked into it), they have chosen what approach makes most sense for them.