All games revolve around learning. Much of what makes a game fun in the first place is learning to overcome obstacles, how to defeat difficult enemies and solve complex puzzles. As good games scaffold and regulate this learning process fluidly, inserting serious material in a good game would lead to a good serious game. This is the theory. In practice however, many serious games struggle to reach their full potential. In part this is because very little is known scientifically of what makes a well-designed serious game. We are empirically investigating which game design techniques work and which don’t.

We’ve created a serious game called Code Red Triage that trains players how to provide medical assistance at a large crisis situation. We want to test whether the just-in-time presentation of information in regular entertainment games (Gee, 2005) is actually beneficial for serious games as well, or if a ‘less friendly’ game design leads to better learning.

It will be your job to oversee the experiment and write a scientific report about the outcome of the experiment.

You can only apply under the follow conditions:

- You must be able to start summer 2010 at the latest
- You have at least a basic grasp of Dutch (the game and questionnaires are in Dutch)

If you’re interested, contact Erik van der Spek of the Cognition and Communication group:

eriks@cs.uu.nl
http://people.cs.uu.nl/eriks/