

Use Case CSU Global

How Game Strategies provided the engaging and practical solution CSU Global required to teach the soft skills needed to lead organizations



- **Company:** CSU Global
- **Industry:** Education
- **Challenge:**
Learning soft skills
- **Solution:**
Game-based learning methodology by Game Strategies
- **Results:**
 - 86,1%** Recommendation rate.
 - 97,55%** Applicability rate.
 - 70%** Desire to replay.
 - 80%** Knowledge increase.



Colorado State University Global is a 100% online nonprofit state school that is fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. The university has provided online education to bachelor and master's students since 2008. As CSU's courses are online, their student base is incredibly diverse, with students from many different countries and backgrounds. They pride themselves on being student-centric and are seeking to become the premier online university. CSU has been growing at a break-neck pace and is expanding globally. Dina Samora has been with CSU Global for seven years. She is currently the Program Director for the Organizational Leadership course. Her role is to manage the curriculum and program development, as well as overseeing the students' experience.

The challenge in learning soft skills

Dina and her team wanted to innovate and increase student engagement. In Dina's program, teaching soft skills is essential, but they are nearly impossible to assess outside of a real-world environment. It is often after graduation, when students become leaders, that they make mistakes and discover their strengths and weaknesses. That's what the team wanted to change. Soft skills can be taught, but how can we ensure that students truly internalize them? That was the main challenge they needed to overcome.

In organizational leadership, there is a tendency to think that only technical skills are necessary, but there is much more to consider, particularly soft skills and emotional intelligence, which are often overlooked. Self-assessment is essential in leadership: students need to learn to know themselves, understand their strengths and weaknesses, and know how to collaborate with others.

That’s why Dina set out to find a way for her students to practice these soft skills in an academic setting. That’s when she discovered Game Strategies.

Game-based learning in steps

Dina and Game Strategies formed a partnership and integrated the platform into the Organizational Leadership course. They began by having students play the Pacific game on the platform, as it aligned perfectly with the course content. Students played one segment of the game each week over the course of about seven weeks.

When the team introduced the game as an integral part of the course, they were unsure how students would respond, especially given the wide range of ages. Dina succeeded in getting the rest of the faculty on board and excited about the games, which in turn got the students enthusiastic about playing. In the end, all the students enjoyed this innovative learning experience.



**Gamification and
Storytelling**



**Top quality
and applicable
content**



**Real-life
simulations with
personalized
feedback**

The Solution: Game - based learning

When the students began playing, they immediately became engaged. The game was visually stimulating and highly captivating. As players, they had the opportunity to be fully immersed in the game and to practice what it means to be a leader. They completely dove into the experience and formed a deep connection with the characters, speaking about them as if they were real people they were working with. That’s how the relationship between CSU and Game Strategies began, and it has only grown stronger ever since. The Game Strategies platform combines simulations, gamification, and storytelling to allow students to practice behavioral skills in safe environments, offering an authentic game-based learning experience. Compared to other simulation programs previously used, Game Strategies clearly outperformed every other option.

The results speak for themselves

Dina didn’t know exactly what the solution to her challenges would be, but when she and her team found Game Strategies they realized they’d stumbled upon what they were looking for. Dina sums up the results concisely, “it really did what we were hoping it would do”. From the students’ and faculty’s feedback, they knew they had made a wise choice. The students of Organizational Leadership rate the games’ applicability to their course and professional lives at 97.5%. 86.1% of them would recommend the platform to their colleagues and they gave it an NPS (net promoter score) of 35.7. Moreover, around 70% of students ask if they can play the games again. Using Game Strategies’ platform in their course presented very clear advantages.



The first was the high level of engagement. Faculty love teaching with the games integrated into the course because the students are fully engaged. That engagement motivates the students and creates an energy in the course room that can't be created any other way. The Organizational Leadership course has generated its own environment, different from any other course offered by CSU, and that's thanks to Game Strategies' platform.

Another advantage is that students can apply what they've learned in previous courses to the game. They had a chance to practice the necessary soft skills to lead an organization in a safe environment. The students declared that playing the games on Gamelearn's platform had been "life-changing" for them as leaders. With these games, students could practice without hurting anyone or causing any damage, and they could realize the areas they needed to work on. It truly prepared them for real-world situations. Dina estimates an increase of over 80% in the knowledge the students learned about leadership by using the platform.

Dina highly recommends Game Strategies for the immersive and hands-on experience its games provide. The ability to instantly see the results of your decisions, rather than in a real organization where you might cause problems, is invaluable. The Game Strategies platform is an excellent way to learn, not only in an academic setting but also in the professional world. As Dina puts it, "It's a fun and fast way to train adults without having to send them through a full course. They can focus on their self-development at their own pace and truly see results."

"Students loved the soft skills, they walked away knowing more about themselves as leaders, knowing more about their abilities, their strengths and weaknesses, and that is priceless."

Program Director, Organizational
Leadership at Colorado State
University Global

"For a moment you can forget about what's going on in life and you get to be the leader, you get to practice what it's like to be the leader. That's why we chose Game Strategies."

Program Director, Organizational
Leadership at Colorado State
University Global

Looking ahead: creating customized educational games

Dina and CSU plan to continue their partnership with Game Strategies, "we know the students like it and we know it works". She's confident that more and more program directors within CSU are going to start using Game Strategies. In her opinion, many specializations and courses can be enhanced with Game Strategies.

She's also working on making it possible for her students to play the games multiple times, as they want to try different approaches and see how they affect the outcome. This is a key factor in measuring students' engagement, seeing how many times they play the games, and Dina has high hopes.

Another thing that really has her team excited is Editor, Game Strategies' video game authoring tool. They're already planning on making shorter games with Editor to really drive home certain concepts of organizational leadership that they want students to concentrate on. The great thing about Editor is not needing to have any technical skills, there's no coding needed to make your own educational game. It's quite powerful, it can change the way you plan the course.

The team's strategy is to have students play the games on Game Strategies' platform and then take some specific elements a bit further with games created using Editor. Dina says her team "can't wait to get their hands on Editor", it'll be at the forefront of program development for Organizational Leadership at CSU.

