Do you like games? Do you care about water? Then this Integrative Project is for you!

There are many games where water (resources) play a central role, and many of those are well suited for education at various levels. An example is the World Water Game, where the player decides on measures to avoid water shortages in different regions of the world. In another game, developed by the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), the player can take different water management actions for a city and rural areas along a stream reach. Within H2K we have recently developed a web-based, multi-player game called Irrigania¹, which aims to represent water conflicts among several actors in a simplified way. While simple in its rules, this game illustrates several theoretical-game situations typical for water-related conflicts and especially illustrates the tragedy of the commons. Other types of games include board games like the “River Basin Game” and “Globalization of Water Management” (developed by Arjen Hoekstra), which are designed to demonstrate issues related to sharing a common resource in an up- and downstream setting, incorporating the concepts of a water footprint and virtual water trade.

The project will start with a survey of existing water-related games, including both computer and board games. These games will be tested (=DB), which will result in recommendations on when (e.g. for which age, topic, ...) to use which game. In this part of the project we will also look at theoretical-game aspects of water-related issues and study what makes a good game.

The second part of the project will be the development of ideas for new games. Here there are no limits for our creativity, and everything from card games to computer games, and games on the water cycle to games on water conflict are possible. Smartphone games would also be an interesting option. Depending on the number of participants and interests we will be able to create one or several games (or game ideas/concepts).

Welcome to GEO401! Let’s play!

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PS: one of my personal favorite games is Settlers of Catan, BUT there is no water in this game – perhaps this project can lead to a hydrological version of Settlers?