Teaching Toolkit

An Introduction to Games based learning

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An Introduction to Game based learning

Games offer a unique structure to complement traditional teaching strategies and infuse teaching with energy, spark innovative thinking and provide diversity in teaching methods. Games make learning concepts more palatable for students and supply learners with a platform for their creative thoughts to bounce around. Games encourage creative behaviour and divergent thought (Fuszard, 2001) and are excellent ice breakers. Games will often act as learning triggers inducing lively discussion on learning concepts amongst students following game play.

Games as Pedagogical Devices

As pedagogical devices, games are extremely useful - they can enliven teaching topics and are especially effective for dealing with problem solving and key concepts. Research shows that “games have a special role in building students’ self-confidence” and “they can reduce the gap between quicker and slower learners” (Fuscard, 2001).
The highly adaptable, flexible nature of games means that they can be moulded to suit a variety of learning settings and environments, even VLE’s such as Blackboard, this can add another layer of interactivity and facilitate distance learning students. The number of game frames or models available is extensive, so no matter what discipline you teach in, there is a game model you can use. Apart from inviting students to learn curriculum content in a fun and relaxed manner, games also expose students to other skill development during game play via sequential, verbal, visual and kinetic and other game based activities.
Game Example: *Where do you go* Game?

**Aim:** To develop the information literacy of First year students

- Students have 10 minutes to play the *Where do you go* game.
- The game is designed for Stage 1 students.
- The *where do you go* game uses playing cards to teach students where to search for different kinds of information when they have a particular need.
- The blue cards are a mix of different resources the students could consult and the yellow cards detail the queries or particular needs.
- The cards are jumbled up and the students are encouraged to discuss and match the cards (see a sample of the cards below) into correct pairs.
- Students are not allowed to consult any other materials or computers during the *Where do you go* game.
- Following the game play, the facilitator provides students with an explanation of correct play to link the game to the learning objectives and student projects to reinforce learning and increase retention.
**Where do you go Game - Sample Playing Cards**

- **Databases**
  - When you want to search for different kinds of research on a topic eg: trials/ case studies /reviews /abstracts /articles you search

- **Textbook**
  - When you want to revise the basics of a topic you go to a

- **Print/ Electronic Journals**
  - When you want to find a specific article you go to
To find national statistics information you would check

Official Government website

To find out about a new topic & get a full definition you would go to an

Encyclopedia
References

Websites

• Engage Learning- European Web Portal for Game-Based Learning resources and dissemination—Sample Games and Good Practice Examples
  http://www.engagelearning.eu/teachers/?page_id=26
• Educause Learning Initiative
  http://www.educause.edu/eli
• Searchable database of educational games
  http://www.wingz2fly.com/GameSurvey/search.html
• The Game Based Learning Community - Non-commercial online forum for thought leaders, innovators and practitioners
  http://www.gamebasedlearning.org.uk/
• Example of an award winning public health game from Merlot (the Multimedia educational resource for learning and online teaching)
  http://www.merlot.org/merlot/viewMaterial.htm?id=85084

Journal Papers


Conferences

European Conference on Game Based Learning (ECGBL) http://www.academic-conferences.org/ecgbl/ecgbl-home.htm

Future Reality of Gaming (FROG) conference provides an open and international platform for leading game studies researchers and scholars, game designers, researchers and scholars from various other fields, education professionals, and gamers from around the world http://bupp.at/en/service-en/frog/frog-2011/