



LOW HANGING FRUIT

The Joys of Gamification

By Dylan Baker

With smartphones and Facebook in hand, most of us have experienced the joy of playing a game. Whether lining up a skillful match in Candy Crush or using all 7 tiles in Words with Friends, games provide a strong sense of reward, engagement and mastery. Harnessing those positive aspects in the classroom with gamification (utilizing the fun and addictive elements of games in other real-world activities) promotes engagement.

Here are a few components of gamification that support learning:

Achievements & Badges: Acknowledging students' progress and accomplishments with discrete badges provides a free (or low-cost) reward to strive for and collect. Badges can be digital (simple graphics on a webpage) or physical (like custom-made buttons from a button maker), so long as students can view and display the collections with pride.

Challenges & Quests: String individual assignments and homework into a narrative or interlocked story to transform the mundane into a more epic activity. For example, reframe a set of worksheets into the puzzles of an escape room which students must solve to survive.

Choices & Options: Games often present players with choices regarding which level they want to tackle next and sometimes offer a choice of rewards for their characters, as well. Implement this by presenting students with multiple paths of demonstrating their understanding of a lesson, such as a choice between completing a test, an essay or a presentation.

Cooperation & Competition: Placing students in teams and providing team or class-wide goals with rewards for helping their peers succeed breeds cooperation (and reinforces their own comprehension). On the other side, publishing leaderboards and accomplishments fosters healthy competition between individuals or groups that encourages extra effort to achieve a top-tier standing.

Failure & Perseverance: Good games present failures as necessary obstacles that can be overcome with repeated attempts informed each time by learning from previous mistakes. Providing opportunities for do-overs and second (and third) chances cultivates resilience and construes failures as learning opportunities.

Gamification incorporates many models that can help reach students by making learning more fun and engaging. For more information on incorporating gamification into your classroom, talk with your school librarian. And don't forget to award yourself a Low Hanging Fruit badge and 1000 XP (experience points) for your newfound knowledge of gamification!

Low Hanging Fruit is available through school libraries, and made possible with support of the Idaho Commission for Libraries. For previous editions, go to <http://libraries.idaho.gov/lowhangingfruit>.

LINKS TO MORE LEARNING



International Games Week

The week of Oct. 29—Nov. 4, people all over the world will go to their local library and play games. Cool! Check with your local library to learn about Games Day in your area, or organize a game day at school.

<http://www.ilovelibraries.org/gaming>

Game That Can Give you 10 Extra Years of Life

A TEDTalk from game designer extraordinaire, Jane McGonigal, about resilience. It's a good one!

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jane-mcgonigal/watch-now-1up-your-life_b_3876195.html

A good place to start:

Gamification in Education from Edutopia.

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/gamification-in-education-vicki-davis>

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



Make Badges

There are a wide variety of free badge makers available, and they are easy to set up and use. Some are more versatile than others, but it isn't difficult to find one that will work. This badge was made on Badgelist.com where there are tutorials to help set up groups and create badges..



To earn this badge, read this edition of LHF, then follow this link to claim it:

<https://www.badgelist.com/Libraries/Gamification-LHF>

DIGITAL TOOLS



STEM Game

Each piece of this virtual game board links to a fun activity designed to help preschoolers (with parental assistance) develop math, science, and logic skills.

See how many questions it takes you to solve the button guessing game!

Access the STEM game at LiLI.org or see all STEM/STEAM resources at:

<http://lili.org/dbs/category/51>



