

Gaming Journal

First Entry: March 6th

I decided to investigate online gaming as an educational tool in my classroom. Two of my students in my grade 9 science class have been talking about Minecraft during one of my classes, and it occurred to me that this may be something that I could incorporate into my classroom.

Second Entry: March 17th

Before investigating online gaming, I decided to investigate the use of games in general as a valid tool for learning in our classrooms. Do games really help us to learn?

In my grade 9 science class, I am starting with something simple - Element Bingo. I introduced the game to them after I had taught them about the periodic table. This was a simple introduction as they were all familiar with the game of Bingo. Each card had the names of each element on them to help them get use to the names. Today I pulled out the element names randomly and they had to look up the name on their periodic table to match it with the correct symbol. Most of my students participated well and enjoyed it. They asked when we would play it again.

B	I	N	G	O
Vanadium	Lead	Dysprosium	Nitrogen	Cerium
Argon	Neon	Yttrium	Hydrogen	Iridium
Gallium	Mendelevium	Free Space!	Chlorine	Rhodium
Astatine	Neptunium	Francium	Magnesium	Titanium
Scaborgium	Berkelium	Zinc	Polonium	Fluorine

Third Entry: March 19th

This time, my students were given a different styled bingo card that instead of having the name of the element on it, it has only the element's symbol. I had the students randomly pull the name of an element out of my 'Bingo' box and then they had to locate the name on their own periodic table to match it with the symbol on the card.

B	I	N	G	O
Ti	Ag	Pb	Ga	W
Re	Cr	Pt	In	Kr
O	Ne	FREE	H	He
Rn	Po	Zr	Dy	As
Hg	Sn	Nb	Mn	Na

Fourth Entry: March 21st

Today when we played Elemental Bingo in class, I again had the students randomly pick out numbers ranging from 1 to 50 (the more common elements and representing more of the elements they are required to know) as we had learned about identifying elements based on their Atomic Numbers. This time the students had to look up the number on the periodic table to match it with its element and then see if it was on their bingo card. I also added the element of a prize to increase the competition and to help engage them. For my students learning the atomic numbers became a sub-goal, winning the chocolate bar became the main goal. I checked today to see if my students were learning from playing the game by giving them a small quiz on atomic numbers and the periodic table. The class averaged 75% and for me this is positive feedback. One comment I have is that I found some of my students were discouraged when it took a more than five draws for them to have a square to mark off.

Fifth Entry: March 22nd



Today I began to investigate the game Prodigy to see if this would be a helpful online game to incorporate into my modified grade 10 special needs math class, Numeracy and Numbers. Positives about the game is that it is based on the Ontario Curriculum for Grades 1 - 6 and I liked the idea that you can make up an assignment and include it in the game so as they move through the game they are answering questions to continue through the quest. My hesitation with using the game is that it is when you log on, you have to select which grade level you are using, and although some of my math students

are struggling, they like to think they are completing math that is of a grade 9 to 10 level. I don't want this to discourage them from trying.



Sixth Entry: March 24th

We played Periodic Table Bingo again today with my grade 9 science class. Today the students were given a description of the element and they had to tell me which element they thought it was. Many of them contributed answers. Tomorrow once they come up with the element they will then have to locate it on their periodic table to find its symbol. Overall I think this has been successful - I know they enjoy playing as they have asked to play on a few occasions and some of them are learning without realizing it.

Seventh Entry: March 27th

Surveyed a few other teachers about their thoughts with using on-line gaming in the classroom as learning tool. One of my colleagues is investigating the use of online gaming in her classroom and is allowing some of her students to use Minecraft to complete a project in her English class. I had to ask if she had difficulty with the site being blocked by the board and what she had suggested her students do was to download Minecraft onto a USB port and bring it into the school. While this is a good solution, what about the students who don't have Mindcraft? And the game is not being used by all of the students in her class, just those who already had access to it. I would like for all of my students to be involved in a class project that would encourage them to work together so they can develop skills such as collaboration, teamwork,

Eighth Entry: March 30th

http://www.brainygamer.com/the_brainy_gamer/2011/03/lbp-classroom.html



Today I began to learn about minecraft and investigated methods/ways to incorporate MindCraft into my classroom. It can be incorporated in many different curriculum subject areas, some perhaps more obvious than other such as geography, but also into history lessons as students can build ancient places such as rome, christian studies can have students building historical churches or even the

vatican. For my math classrooms my students could determine the number of blocks needed, area and perimeter, distance, how fast the blocks are being laid down, and even trajectory.



Ninth Entry: April 2nd

The lesson I had planned for my Grade 9 science class today was based on websites that I was able to access at home as well as when I got to school. Frustration came when my students were blocked from using these websites, most likely because the word 'game' was somewhere in the URL address. This is a challenge and a stumbling block for using the internet and certain websites. Although my lesson today did not incorporate games, I was attempting to help my grade 9's develop research skills, critical thinking skills and self-directed learning.

I also taught my modified grade 10 math class to play Yahtzee to help them with probabilities. There is some strategy to Yahtzee as well as the students have to decide how to play the dice they have rolled. For example, is it better to use four 2's as four of a kind option or as the 2's option on the card. (at the end of the journal I have included the rules for Yahtzee). I suppose it could be argued that is a live lesson - live is what you make of the cards you're dealt.

Tenth Entry: April 3rd



I began to research the online game LittleBigPlanet2. This game is intriguing to me because it has many applications in the classroom beyond content. I found the website, 'Brainy Gamer' that not only points out how this game encourages game design literacy, it also listed four projects designed to teach students physics, logic, binary numbers and even the properties of stem cells. This shows the variety this game has to offer for its use in our classrooms. Sony, the developers of this game, are also trying to introduce Teacher Packs for LittleBigPlanet2 that would incorporate (most likely at this stage United States) curriculum.

Four Projects Listed:

- #1. The Day In the Life of Computer - teaches Computer Science key concepts such as binary code, logic, and programming
- #2. Discovery Pier - While at an amusement park and interacting with rides, in-game lessons teach players the principles of physics and engineering
- #3. Sackboys and the Mysterious Proof - students must escape from a century-old mansion by solving puzzles using deductive reasoning.
- #4. Stem Cell Sack Boy - students shrink to microscopic sizes and learn about cell growth and reproduction while exploring the importance of stem cell research and the ethical issues surrounding it.

I also began to write a proposal to get a game console into my classroom so I can begin to incorporate online games into my lessons for my students. There is a website called 'My Classroom Needs' that encourages teachers to post proposals for equipment needed beyond what is usually provided for in a regular school budget. The website is then accessible by individuals who may want to donate either funds or the equipment for the teacher to use in their classroom.

(Brainy Gamer Website address:

http://www.brainygamer.com/the_brainy_gamer/2011/03/lbp-classroom.html)



We also began a game of Monopoly in my grade 10 modified math class today. Part of this was to see how well they would focus on the game. Many of them did very well and we are going to continue the game next week. Monopoly incorporates the use of money as well as counting for these students, skills many of them do not have. There is also strategy as they not only buy properties, decide how many houses to put on them, they need to make sure they don't overextend themselves and go bankrupt. In this game has rules, objectives and goals, as well as competition.



Eleventh Entry: April 6th

I just began to investigate this game, Kinect Sports Rival, mainly because I saw an advertisement for a Kinect Sport Rival about an international competition for the game. I have taught Exercise Science, a grade 12 phys ed course that studies the human body and how it moves. Students, while completing some of the sport activities in the game, such as rock climbing, could be discussing/investigating which muscles are being used.