

“Are We Playing a Game Today?”: Classroom Engagement and Assessment Through Gamification

Tracy Hudson (thudson@yorktech.edu)

Kendall Lentz (klentz@yorktech.edu)

York Technical College



WHY SHOULD I TRY GAMING IN MY CLASSROOM?

Gone are the days of instructors standing at podiums droning on while students furiously write down notes. Students today are looking for a more interactive classroom style, and using games in the classroom is a quick and easy method to provide such an engaging environment.

BENEFITS OF GAMING IN THE COLLEGE CLASSROOM

- Increases student engagement
- Creates a classroom students want to be in, thereby improving attendance and success rates
- Encourages students to get to know each other
- Provides a more relaxed forum for instructors to interact with students
- Allows quick and easy assessment without relying on graded assignments

HELPFUL ONLINE RESOURCES

Kahoot (create.kahoot.it): instructor-created question-and-answer game that allows students to “ring-in” in real-time on their smartphones. Allows instructors to track student responses and export data to Google Drive or Excel. Does not require student accounts.

Poll Everywhere (polleverywhere.com): similar to Kahoot, Poll Everywhere allows for quick assessment through a question-and-answer game. Students “ring-in” through texting their answers to the number provided on-screen. Allows those who do not have smart phones to participate.

Jeopardy (jeopardylabs.com): enables instructors to create a customized Jeopardy-like game without PowerPoint. The games are web-based and can be played anywhere there is an internet connection.

Various Other Games (teach-nology.com): vast repository that provides a multitude of gaming resources to teachers, including bingo and puzzles. Also includes thousands of free printables that can be adapted to the college classroom.

Traditional Games

With Modifications for the College Classroom



Bingo Games

Goals: To assess content knowledge in a team or individual setting.

Instructions: Give clues and have students mark the answers on their bingo cards (you may find it helpful to create cards with different arrangements). Collect bingo cards from student(s) who get 4 in a row either up, down, or diagonally. Draw from the correct cards to award a prize.

How we use it: Definitions/terms and quick grammar check-ups.

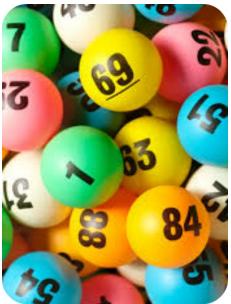


Puzzle-It Games

Goals: To reinforce the ideas of structure and order in a team setting

Instructions: Cut the source material into irregular pieces and ask groups of students to reassemble the parts. For this to be most effective, it is helpful to have 6 or more total examples (giving at least 18 “puzzle” pieces) per group.

How we use it: MLA citations and paragraph order.



Lottery Games

Goals: To quickly assesses individual student knowledge of key concepts

Instructions: Students answer questions on a sheet of paper. After they answer, they bring their slip of paper to the front. The teacher assesses the answer. If it is correct, it goes into a “hat” to be entered into a drawing to win a prize. If it is incorrect, the student returns to his seat to try again.

How we use it: Quick grammar checkups.



Candy Land

Goals: To assess content knowledge in competitive small groups, actively engaging all students simultaneously.

Instructions: Create groupings of content knowledge you want to assess. Write out individual questions/answers within those groups on index cards. Each group of questions corresponds to a different color on the Candy Land game board. In order for students to progress through the game, they must answer their questions correctly. Students compete against each other within the small groups. One gameboard per four students is needed.

How we use it: Core content knowledge, including writing skills, critical reading, and definitions/terms