

HOW TO GAMIFY YOUR CLASSROOM

gam·i·fi·ca·tion

/ˌɡɑːmɪfəˈkɑːʃən/ Noun:

Using game design mechanics to enhance non-game contexts by increasing engagement, loyalty and participation. Methods of use may include point systems, leaderboards, direct competitions and badges/rewards. Retail marketplaces, personal health care and education are all places where gamification may be found.

Holloway(2019)

Why use Gamification in your classroom?

Video games have become one of the largest industries in the world, worth over 140 billion dollars. Video games have become a culture, and most kids are completely bought in. This means they relate, understand and fully enjoy a classroom that is gamified because they understand video game logic. A gamified classroom is better than your average classroom because students are much more interactive and engaged with the class and its concepts because it's something they enjoy. The students will have feelings of enjoyment when they succeed and are able to continue on to the next unit or level. These feelings that students get in the classroom will make them want to work harder and succeed more. The whole idea of gamification is not new, but now more than ever it is able to help students be successful.

TeachThought(2019), Classcraft



10 Keys to gamification

• Allow students to be Co-Designers

Allow the students to have a say in how the class is run so they have a sense of ownership. This will promote increased participation.

• Allow Second Chances

Students need a chance to learn from their mistakes so they can make improvements and succeed. They shouldn't just move on because they didn't understand a topic.

• Provide Instant Feedback

In video games the player gets instant feedback to know if they're doing the right things. This idea can be brought to the classroom to show students that they're doing the right things.

• Make Progress Visible

In video games the player can see their progress and how close they are to the next level. Show students how close they are to the next topic to encourage progression.

• Create Challenges or Quests

By changing the context in which work is presented to the students you can make work seem like a fun challenge or quest that the students must do to continue.

• Give Students Voice and Choice

Give students the option to not take a test at the end of a unit or "level" but instead do a project or some other creative assessment to show mastery of the subject.

• Offer Students Badges and Rewards

The badges are like milestones that show, not only the student but, everyone else what that student has done. They can be progress updates or even goals achieved.

• Have an Achievement System

An achievement system is a good way to promote participation in the students because they have something to work towards that could benefit them.

• Implement Technology

A huge part of learning in the 21st century is technology. It's very important to have technology in the classroom so students have a chance to properly learn how to use it.

• Emphasize Practice; Embrace Failure

The gamified classroom is all about self-driven learning to help students gain key skills through emphasizing practice and embracing failure.

Holloway(2019), Haiken(2017), TeachThought(2019)

Gamification's Limitations

Gamification does come with a few downfalls. If you give a reward for every single assignment, students will always expect to be given something, even for a basic task. This can carry over to student's adult lives as well. Gamification is still heavily criticized and you will undoubtedly receive some form of disapproval from either other teachers, parents, or possibly even students. The last downside to gamifying your classroom is that it takes a lot of work on both your side and the student's side. Gamifying will take lots of planning and preparation. It is a jump from teaching a regular classroom and takes time to set up. You need to have patience when switching and be sure to give students time to adjust as well. This is just as new to students as it is to you. After working around issues it will work wonderfully for you and your students. Practice makes perfect and you can't practice without failure so be patient.

TeachThought(2019),Lynch(2017), Haiken(2017)

How Gamification affects the brain.

When a person wins in a video game or even just a game in general the brain receives positive feedback and releases the neurotransmitter dopamine which makes the person happy or just simply feel good. Gamification modifies the brain's reward center and ameliorates learning. Winning or succeeding feels good for everyone and everyone knows that. This same succeeding feeling comes standard with a gamified classroom. When a students beats a unit or "level" they feel a sense pride and accomplishment. Which activates the neurocenter in the brain that releases dopamine. This way students will want to continue to strive to succeed so they can get same feeling of accomplishment that comes with the brain releasing dopamine. This release of dopamine during gamified learning accomplishments results in a long-lasting affinity for the academic subject or for solving complex problems. Reward related signals from the brain's pleasure center have been reported to promote the storage of new information into long-term memory through release of dopamine modulation of the midbrain, which activates the hippocampus, a structure primarily involved in learning and memory. With the success of the students comes dopamine and that leads to better understanding and memory of the subject or topic. One massive downside and risk with this is that students brains will eventually no longer react as strongly to educational success and this leads to students not working as hard. An easy way to get by this and make sure it doesn't happen is to know when to reward students and when not reward them. For example on a massive assignment or test you should reward accordingly based off the amount of points its worth, Where as on a small assignment a reward may not always be necessary.

Lynch(2017)

More people in north America consume **video games** then movies and music combined.

ClassCraft

58% of Americans play video games.
45% of gamers are women.

Livia(2018)

58% of parents play video games with their children as a way to **socialize** with them.

Livia(2018)