

Making Learning Engaging Through Interactive Games

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Interdisciplinary

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Lecture – 01

In this topic, we are going to explore one of the very popular sources of board games and card games and activity games. The reason why it is helpful to explore a resource is as we start getting used to the game-based teaching methodology, there are several things that we need to get in place. One is the game design, mapping it on to the appropriate topics and syllabus. All of these might be a little bit overwhelming or time consuming even if the teacher is really interested in adopting this pedagogy. So, I would recommend that we make use of existing pre-designed games if they are available and relevant to the syllabus and leverage them so that it is just a question of understanding their rules and fitting them into the context. So one of the popular repositories that is available is called TPT or Teachers Pay Teachers.

We can go to the website www.teacherspayteachers.com. It's a repository where several teachers around the world have contributed and continue to contribute games, and classroom activities of different subjects and different age groups.

Predominantly, it caters to K-12, but it also has a few adult learning resources which could be used in undergraduate and postgraduate. So, let us see how one can get registered and start using the resources. As you can see on the screen, The highlighted portion shows the login or join. If you can see, the highlighted portion shows the login or join. One needs to click that and then you will find this screen loading which is essentially having both the login prompt and if you are not a member yet, it is requesting us to register.

So, if you see the highlighted bottom portion, which is the rectangle, the first time one is going in, you need to register. It takes us to a very simple registration form that asks our first and last name, email address, etc., password and it is asking a preference of which grade range a teacher is teaching. Now, this is just basic information being collected. If let us say one is teaching secondary school or high school or for that matter even under graduation, they can write or they can choose the option of what they are currently doing.

This does not prevent them from downloading or accessing other resources. It is just a

preference and a user profile input. So continuing on the registration form, one needs to select their country and if one is interested in accessing and receiving resources like emailers, teaching tips etc, they can check on the checkbox and click on that I'm not a robo and then join now. It's a very simple registration form which can be completed in 2-3 minutes. Now as far as the wanting to receive mails and freebies, teaching tips, I would recommend that one checks on that box initially.

Since we need triggers to go back to the website and check, these emails could help us get introduced to newer things that get added in the Teachers Pay Teachers repository. Of course, on the flip side, sometimes it can be a bit overwhelming to continuously find marketing messages. But in general, they are not very frequent. So it's a reasonable, in my experience, I have found them to be very moderate in their marketing messages. So I would recommend clicking and choosing that option.

And if the teacher finds it not helpful, they can always unsubscribe by writing back to them. So with this, you click on the join now and then you will get a mail confirming your registration. The next step is go to the login screen and login with your credentials that you had created. Once you enter the repository, you will find several menu options on top. I am not listing all of them, but what is of particular interest if you see the left hand side of the screen is three specific search criteria.

There are other smaller criteria too which I am not showing but these would be of the biggest help. The first one is related to grades. Once again this is a US based repository and therefore it may conform to their teaching standards, syllabus etc. But in general and on a broad-based scale, they are very similar to what is seen in the rest of the world. There could be minor differences.

So in some parts of the world, some things could get covered in an earlier standard and in other parts of the world, it could be coming a bit later. But by and large, it should be within the same ballpark. So you could use this as the basis and standard. Now, beyond the grades, you've also got a few materials that you can see below, which is, it's not grade specific, or it's higher education, adult education, homeschooling, staff, etc. So, these are common themes like maybe sustainability, maybe social emotional learning, and other things that could be across the grades and not specific to a particular grade.

The second search criteria is about the subjects you have ranging from the standard school subjects like English, math, science, social studies. You also have themes like art and music, holidays and seasonal specific things and foreign languages. So, it's spread across the spectrum and these are by the way only the high-level topics. As you can see the arrow, they have subtopics within them when you actually go inside and look for specific topics.

Examples of subtopics and sub-themes could be let's say within math you can explore algebra, geometry, etc.

Within science, you will have chemistry, biology, physics and even some other subtopics. These are more for classification purposes. If we know exactly what we are searching, possibly we can use the exact criteria. If not, it is still okay to go with whatever we know and then apply filters and try and search for the relevant topics and themes. The third one also matters for a teacher and a school.

We want it to be as economical as possible. Most resources from a US standard pricing are fairly cheap but even here I would say the conditions of the school and the affordability of the budget or if you are a private teacher wanting to explore that could vary. So what I have found is that to begin with, choose the free criteria. There are a lot of free games which are very good. And there are some paid games that are good too.

But irrespective of where you are, if you have not experienced anything, it's easiest to start with the free resources. And the good part is this entire teachers pay teachers website is free and it has free resources so it's a very nice way for teachers to get started and once you experiment and once you find that this method is working you can always look at the additional paid resources depending on your budget availability. So, just to illustrate I have chosen, let us say in this example, eighth grade and within math, let us say one chooses algebra and prices we decided to keep it free. So, if you put a search, now I have just shown a listing of about three games. It is not just three, these are the top three that appeared as I searched for the games today.

There will be innumerable number of games appearing. On top, there could be sometimes a sponsored games link which could come with pricing. You can ignore that. If you scroll down a little bit, you will start finding the free games. And one can start exploring by downloading these games onto the laptop or PC, opening the games, exploring the rules and trying and seeing the content, game rules and relevance to the syllabus being taught.

So, let us say among these I am just choosing the second one, click on the algebra solving one and two step equation mazes, you see an icon download there which is highlighted, you click on that and you will find that resource downloading onto your local PC. Keep continuing to explore this repository, download resources and try them out in your classrooms according to the time and the class plan. Now, this is the quickest way of getting started into integrating game-based pedagogy. Of course, you may need in the case of printables, some of these games to be printed, a few copies and distributed to the class members, but this will really help teachers get jump-started into the player-based pedagogy in classrooms. Definitely look at the classroom experience, seek inputs from students and

try to improvise, try to search for more games and try using different criteria.

Sometimes the game that you chose, for example, in our example, we discussed algebra for class 8 and the topic in algebra that you might be teaching in your syllabus might be in let us say class 8 or 9 or instead of class 8, it may be in class 7 or class 9, in which case you may have to exclude the grade as the criteria, you can just search with algebra as a topic and just in case you feel that resources are not showing up, you can go more granular in the criteria or you can make the criteria more broad based. And keep exploring and trying out and see how this works. This is the quickest start for a K-12 teacher, I would say. Of course, there are other repositories. I am not saying this is the only one, but this is one popular game repository that one can get started with. Thank you.