

How To Use Digital Games To Engage Your Students In Learning Language

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Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS)

- University of Oregon, Julie Sykes, Director
- National Foreign Language Resource Center
- 1 of 16 centers nationwide, supported by grants under Title VI of the Higher Education Act
- promote the teaching and learning of foreign languages
- home of UO Chinese Flagship Program

Collaborators

Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy (CERCLL)
Jonathan Reinhardt, University of Arizona

What are digital games?

- digital — played on a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, game console (Xbox, Playstation), handheld game console (Nintendo DS), or mobile device (iPod Touch, cell phone)
- game — any of a variety of games and genres involving action-adventure, simulations, time management; single, multiplayer
- Commercial, 'educational', teacher-created

Do games belong in classrooms?

- Claim: games are violent and addictive
- Less than 5% of games are violent; they can be avoided. Some books are violent, but books are not excluded from classrooms wholesale.
- Avid gaming is considered bad; avid reading is considered good.
- Claim: learning cannot result from play
- research shows that many digital games can afford foreign language learning

How games can improve learning

- engage students
- provide continuous feedback about learning progress
- afford new kinds of learning opportunities
- provide volumes of real-time data about student learning for teachers, administrators, parents
- augment (but do not substitute for) classroom learning experiences

Framework for Digital Game-enhanced Materials Development (Reinhardt, J. & Sykes, J. 2011)

- Explore
- Experience: playing and observing the game
- Analysis: noticing and collecting game discourses
- Examine
- Experience: experiences game discourses
- Analysis: analyzing targeted game discourses
- Extend
- Experience: active creation and participation in game discourses
- Analysis: reflective creation and participation in game discourse

Steps to implementing a game in your curriculum

- Plan for the game
- PLAY THE GAME YOURSELF
- Preview activities
- *Explore* activities
- *Examine* activities
- *Extend* activities

Plan for the game

- Consider student interest and background.
- Consider your institutional support and limitations.
 - Can games be loaded on lab/classroom computers or accessed through browsers on lab computers?
- Consider your curricular objectives and needs, and student maturity and proficiency levels.
 - Find a few games that align with your unit topic, or language point or the development of critical literacies.

Gardenscapes: Mansion Makeover™

- a casual, PC, single player, item collection-adventure game (Playrix, 2012)
- activities designed for adolescent or young adult Spanish language learners
- low novice - low intermediate level Spanish
- could be adapted for other foreign languages

Play the game

- Story: The mansion you inherited from your grandfather is in bad condition. Your friends are coming to visit, so you need to fix it up.
- Game play activity: Find objects hidden in scenes and sell them to invest in mansion improvements.

Sample Preview activities

- In pairs, students compare and contrast their houses with typical houses in Mexico. For example, compare and contrast
 - Rooms
 - Furniture
 - The most important electronic devices
 - The most important thing in the house

Sample Explore activities

- Play the game projected on a screen in front of the class.
- Class watches the introductory video.

Sample Examine activities

- Students sell enough items to buy a new chimney and a new floor.
- As they play, they note at least 10 new vocabulary items and 2 new game rules or events that they discovered.

Sample Extend activities

- Students write and present a formal paper.
- Students write a short game review.
- Students simulate the game in the classroom.

Games2Teach

- <https://games2teach.uoregon.edu/>
- 'Publications' tab
- Section A. Digital Game-enhanced Learning Materials
- Select A2. *Gardenscapes: Mansion Makeover* for Spanish by K. Lanser & J. Sykes

M べんと ! ("My Bento!")

- <http://serious-games.jp/bento/index.html>
- Player creates his or her own bento.
- Japanese food related vocabulary with actual photographs
- 2nd semester learners
- Received a Kids Design Award
- English version available

Where to find games

- Google "Online Educational Games"
 - many free games available
- BigFish.com \$, but low cost
 - available in multiple languages

Teacher created games #1

- ARIS (<https://arisgames.org/>)
- a user-friendly, open-source platform for creating and playing mobile games, tours and interactive stories
- players experience a hybrid world of virtual interactive characters, items, and media placed in physical space
- When students are at a particular location, they see a story character located at the same place. They can interact with the character in various ways.

Teacher created games #2

- Scratch (<https://scratch.mit.edu/>)
- Create stories, games, and animations
- Share with others around the world
- Find a game or make your own.
- Click "For Educators" link at bottom of page.
- Example: Ni Hao - A Scratch Course in Chinese (Intro) by BBPUGA

This is just the beginning!

- Thank You!
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