

Why gaming?

Gaming acts as a gateway to the rest of the library I(Hill 2016, 35.) While the primary purpose of most libraries is to provide access to information, it should be said that information can be conveyed in a number of ways, including game-play. Games may prove effective as tools to convey information because they combine both learning and recreation to deliver a complete experience (ibid, 36.) Furthermore, be-

this fosters an environment of learning from each other.

Librarians also occupy an unusual role in that they usually teach one-shot classes, "which may appear to students as optional or supplemental, making it difficult to convince students of the relevance of information literacy to students. (Smale 2012.) Gameplay has the possibility to upend this model by introducing information literacy concepts through a friendly activity that nevertheless includes goals and rewards for successful outcomes.

QR Code



If you want a copy of one or both games, scan the QR code and enter your information. You will receive digital files for the game(s) you select via email within a week.

Sources

Hill, C. (2016) Play On: The Use of Games in Libraries. The Christian Librarian, 59(1), 34-42.

Indiana Department of Education (2020). Indiana academic standards English Language Arts: Grade 3. Indiana Department of Education. Retrieved on May 7, 2024, from <https://www.in.gov/doi/-files/Grade-3-ELA-Standards-Dec-2020.pdf>

Smale, M. A. (2012). Get in the Game: Developing an Information Literacy Classroom Game. Journal of Literacy Innovation, 3(1), 126-147.



Fact or Opinion game

I developed Fact or Opinion in 2019 to provide an educational activity for third graders as part of an early literacy program hosted by my campus. Indiana State English and Language Arts Standard 3.RN.4.1 states "Distinguish between fact and opinion; explain how an author uses reasons and facts to support specific points in a text" (Indiana Department of Education 2020:10.) The game is based partly on classic board games like Sorry, in which players navigate a game board with tokens, and Trivial Pursuit, in that advancement in the game depends on correctly responding to questions provided on cards.

The key to success in this game is understanding that every single statement on the "Fact or Opinion" cards is true; all that players need to do is decide whether or not that statement is presented as a fact or an opinion. The facts are intentionally strange and meant to provoke a humorous response. The questions include prompts like "Fact or Opinion: The mayor of Talkeetna, Alaska from 1997 to 2017 was a cat named Stubbs"

sian if you want to become an astronaut." (Opinion.) By keeping the focus on the form of the prompt, rather than its nature, I intend to draw players into the process of understanding how information is presented.

In order to keep the gameplay unpredictable, I also incorporated a second set of cards. Differentiated from the prompts with a black surface and a question mark on the front, these cards provide opportunities to skip ahead, move to the end of the game or go back to the beginning, among other actions.

While this game was designed for third grade students, it has had an unusual second life as a tool for education majors. Students taking EDUC-M311 and EDUC-E337 have found the game surprisingly challenging and fun to play. These college students had to reassess their approach to the prompts, gaining a fresh awareness about how facts are presented in various ways.

News Flash game

In 2022, I developed News Flash, a game that functions closer to an RPG than a traditional tabletop game. The game ultimately focuses on the process of information gathering – very rarely does a news consumer come to a news story without any information, true or false. This type of informal information gathering is modeled with "News Flashes" – random facts that are introduced by the game moderator – and "Investigations" – questions that players can ask of the moderator and expect a truthful answer.

In this game, players will be introduced to an image of a news story (invented for the game) that is mostly blanked out. There will be scant information on the image, including partial headlines and bylines, outlines of advertisements and bits of the article's text. Players will have an opportunity to examine the image and play an Investigation card. The moderator may also choose to reveal a News Flash card. Each turn begins when a new, more complete iteration of the news story is introduced. In order to determine if the news stories are true or false, they must rely on context clues in the game as well as information presented in the News Flash and Investigation cards. By the end of the game, players must determine if the story is real or fake and offer reasoning behind their conclusions.

Four scenarios are available for this game, allowing for repeated gameplay. In tests, players could complete a game in roughly 20 minutes, although livelier, more interactive groups may come to a conclusion more quickly. While I have tested this game with first-year college students, it could likely be played with upper-level high school students as well. I have used News Flash in both new student orientation and first year seminar class sessions focused on information literacy.



Games in the Academic Library