When we stop playing, we all lose
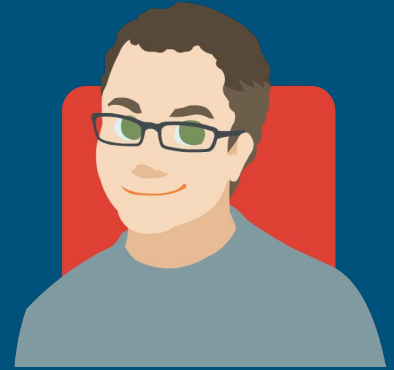
A course in FLO: Practical ways to create fun, challenging learning in your classroom

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Alike short film

Driving Question

How can I provide fun and challenging activities for my students so that they learn with and from each other?

Objectives

Through this course, you'll explore strategies for how to:

- F - Fun
  - Get to know your students and what they find enjoyable and meaningful.
- L - Learning
  - Design learning activities for your students that are authentic and personal.
- O - Others
  - Provide your students with the ability to learn from and with others.

Learning objectives for this session

FLO

F is for Fun

- What is fun for you?
- What is fun for your students? (and how do you find out)
- How is fun connected or disconnected to learning?

What is fun for you?

Discuss with group

What is fun for me?

What is fun for you?

Share your group's thoughts (optional)

Having fun is different for....

Student

Teacher

Administrator

Fun/enjoyment is individual

F U N
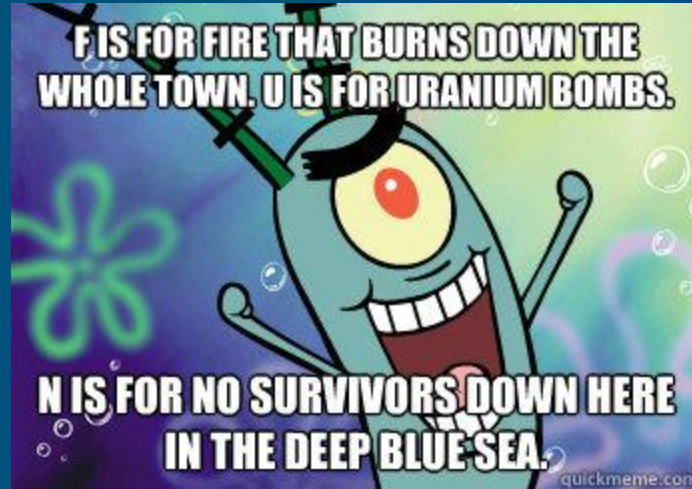
FUN

Why is having fun (being happy) important?

Harvard Research Reveals a Fun Way to Be More Successful

Happiness is important, but we need to understand what makes us happy and how to be happy more often?

Why is having fun important?

From the Playful Learning Website-

"If it's true that 97 percent of teens in the U.S. are playing digital games, then the focus on how games can fit into the shifting education system becomes that much more important."— MindShift

Why is having fun important?

From the Playful Learning Website-

"And while educational games aren't new, Minecraft has some unique advantages that could usher in a new direction in education. In the future, students across the world may spend their class time punching trees."— *PBS Idea Channel*

Why is having fun important?

From the Playful Learning Website-

"What if, instead of seeing school the way we've known it, we saw it for what our children dreamed it might be: a big, delicious video game?"— The New York Times

What is fun for your students?

1. Is traditional education giving us the results we want?
   a. Was the Titanic a success?
2. Why haven't we cared about this before?
3. Why is knowing what is fun for your students important?
4. How do you gather this information?

Survey your students?

What tools can we use to survey our students?

- [Google Forms](#) ([Alice Keeler](#))

- Survey Monkey

- Paper survey

- Any others?

Is fun connected or disconnected to learning?

Do you need to have fun all the time in class?

Sample Fun Questions

1. What do you like to do in your free time?
2. What subjects do you love and hate most in school? Why?
3. Describe your favorite teacher. What types of things did you do in that class?
4. If school could be about any one thing, and it would be my job to design all the subjects around that one thing, what would you want it to be and why?
5. What are your greatest talents; what are you especially good at? What makes you good at that?
6. What was the best thing you did in school last year? What makes you pick that out?
7. Is there a better way to find out what you find fun?

Learning - educator viewpoint

Always learning and improving...or leave profession

Learning today is like the Titanic -

- If we use the same methods many people will fail

Some will succeed no matter the circumstances

Learning - student viewpoint

Learning needs to be fun and engaging (all the time?)

Use what you learned from surveys?

Sometimes simple changes have a big impact

- Michael Matera - *Explore Like a Pirate*
  - Using dice, cards, and taking a chance/risk
- Kahoot!

Learning - student viewpoint

Learning can't be too hard or too easy…..

- FLOW
    - Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Ph.D., psychologist and author of the book, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*
    - Zone of proximal development -- Vygotsky
- Growth
- Individual to each student

Learning - student viewpoint

Learning targets

- Teacher or district mandated?
- Based on the whole class or individually?
- What is best for the learner?
- The myth of the average student

Learning - student viewpoint

A connection needs to be made to the learning (Why do I need to learn this info?)

Learning has to have meaning

A connection through enjoyment or emotion or both

Learning - student viewpoint

Research-

- [Science Shows Making Lessons Relevant Really Matters - Edutopia](#)
- [Benefits of Gaming: What Research Shows](#) - MindShift
  - "But it's a little disingenuous to say that games are "good for kids." Games are not like vegetables. Don't imagine them as if they were packed with vitamins and nutrients that help kids grow into healthy adults. Like all forms of media, it depends on the particular games and how they are used."

Learning - student viewpoint

Learning summary -

- Enjoyment or emotion for long term memory and comprehension
- Matches your learning targets (standards)
- FLOW - not too easy or difficult
- Learning is individual

More could be added - Learning Principles

- James Paul Gee - *What Video Games Have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy*

Others - research

Powerful Learning: Studies Show Deep Understanding Derives from Collaborative Methods

Research shows that teams outperform individuals

- Cooperative groups can be difficult to create
- Connectivism by George Siemens and Stephen Downes

Others - research

[Using Collaborative Reasoning to Support Critical Thinking](#)

[Sample Collaborative Reasoning Participation Guidelines and Conversational Moves](#)

Others - what is needed

Collaborating with others

Building positive relationships

Building groups/communities within the classroom and school

Real-world connection

Others - what is needed

A safe learning environment

Learn to listen and be respectful

Teacher needs to model this behavior

- My style is open and personal

Others - teamwork examples

What are examples of good teamwork?

Others - teamwork examples

Einstein (Theory of relativity proven with solar eclipse)

J.R.R Tolkien (Inklings)

J.K. Rowling (Team of editors)

John Wooden ("The main ingredient of stardom is the rest of the team.")

Others - teamwork tools

Zhang & Doughtery Stahl (2011) state that "Collaborative Reasoning (CR) effectively provides a forum for extended meaningful communication and promotes language development and thinking skills of all students" (257). Collaborative Reasoning is peer-led with students managing their own discussions and having control over what they say within small groups, which increases personal engagement. The purpose of using this model is for students to "cooperatively search for resolutions and develop thoughtful opinions about the topic" (257). Collaborative Reasoning works well with all kinds of students, no matter their gender, race, socioeconomic status, or other domains of diversity.

Zhang, Jie, and Katherine A. Doughtery Stahl. "Collaborative Reasoning: Language-Rich Discussions for English Learners." The Reading Teacher 65.4 (2011): 257-260. Print.

Others - teamwork tools

Cooperative games-

Pandemic

Forbidden Island

Castle Panic

Shadows over Camelot

Space Team (Digital)

Other games?

Others - deeper learning

[Research Supports Collaborative Learning](#) - Edutopia

Others - reflection

Reflection is needed to understand-

- What activities were fun/enjoyable
- Comprehension of learning targets
- How the students have helped and learned from others
  - Recognition of helping others is difficult for students

Others - reflection

Fun-

- What did you enjoy about the lesson or unit?
- What was fun about the lesson?
- What was not fun about the lesson?

Others - reflection

Questions for reflection-

Learn-

- What were the learning targets?
- What learning targets have personal meaning to you?
- Did you have any personal connection to the lesson?
- What will you remember about this lesson in 20 years?
- Were the standards/learning targets important to you?

Others - reflection

Others-

- What did you learn from other people in the class concerning this lesson?
- Did you learn anything important from your peers? If so, what specifically?
- How did you help others with this lesson?
- Do you feel you contributed to the group in this lesson?