



# Board, Not Bored: How to Enhance Classroom Engagement with Board and Card Games

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# Benefits of Gaming in the Classroom

Model, support, or subvert other learning activities

Active participation

Multimodal learning,  
especially social / emotional learning

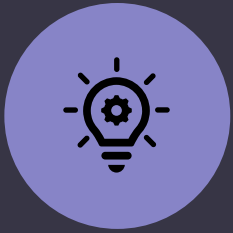
Low-risk opportunities for failure and experimentation

Community building

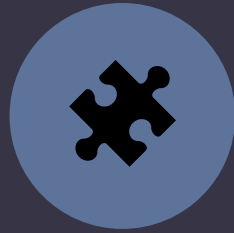
# Game Genres

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As defined by Scott Nicholson



KNOWLEDGE



STRATEGY



ACTION



NARRATIVE



SOCIAL

*Note: most games are a combination of multiple genres*

## COLLABORATION

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Promotes group discussion & shared decision making

Relies on already established connections among players to be effective

## COMPETITION

Motivates some (but not all) players

Presents an opportunity / external motivation for students to challenge themselves

May unfairly illuminate players' weaknesses

# Running Games in the Classroom

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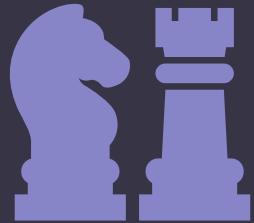
# Considerations

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- Gaming doesn't take the place of other foundational learning activities, such as readings
- Does gaming take place during valuable class time?
- Is everyone playing the game?
- Is everyone playing the same game?
- Can you adapt the game to better suit your needs? (house rules)
- Are people playing solo, in small groups, or as one large group?
- What learning objectives are being reinforced/demonstrated?

# Facilitation

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**You will always need to designate a game facilitator. They will:**

Welcome players and make the experience inviting

Explain the rules and how to play

Arbitrate if questions come up in the midst of play



**The game facilitator doesn't need to be you**

**But** they must be trusted so players don't believe they are showing favoritism or manipulating the game

# Spectators

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- Being outside of play, they can offer commentary and advice
- Students can reflect and apply content knowledge in a modeled environment
- Instructors can use games as an assessment of understanding and learning objectives



# Caveats



Don't base grades on whether a game has been won or lost but on player participation and engagement



Not all games are good games



Even good games might not support your learning objectives



Game publishing is still entrenched in oppressive ideas and should be viewed with a critical lens

# Let's play!

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1. MAKE A GROUP
2. PICK A GAME
3. ASSIGN A FACILITATOR
4. YOU WILL BE ASKED TO SHARE WITH THE CLASS AFTERWARDS  
(ANYONE CAN SPEAK FOR THE GROUP)

# Playtime Reflections

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What worked well?

What was challenging?

What concepts or skills could your chosen game illustrate or reinforce?

Would you change anything about this game?



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- TL;DR: [https://youtu.be/0\\_UTgoPUTLQ?feature=shared](https://youtu.be/0_UTgoPUTLQ?feature=shared)

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Thanks for your attention!