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Foreword

No one would argue that information literacy instruction should not be designed to be effective; unfortunately, however, at times some have looked askance at efforts to ensure that instruction is engaging and, dare it be said, entertaining. We are fortunate to have today’s research in cognitive and educational psychology to assure us that engaged learning is also effective learning. Indeed, engaged learning is even more effective learning!

My favorite definition of active learning is a simple one. Drawing on Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education,” Bonwell and Eison (1991) propose that “strategies promoting active learning be defined as instructional activities involving students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing.” This is such a straightforward description of a powerful pedagogical practice—students doing things and thinking about what they are doing. And with games, that is exactly what is enabled in the information literacy classroom—students do things and think about what they are doing.

Games also assist information literacy instructors with issues related to student motivation. In Motivating Students in Information Literacy Classes, Xu and Jacobson (2004) detailed the application of the ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction) model of motivational design to information literacy instruction. Games can be a high-impact strategy for gaining attention, particularly if students have stereotyped perceptions of libraries and librarians, but they can also be a component of the design for relevance, confidence, and satisfaction.

This book, Let the Games Begin! Engaging Students with Field-Tested Interactive Information Literacy Instruction, is a practical handbook for the busy information literacy educator to call upon for inspiration, innovation, and insight. Because the games have been tested in practice, the information literacy librarian can draw upon the examples in this book with confidence. This book continues in the proud tradition of resource books containing techniques grounded in practice and theory, such as Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers (Angelo and Cross, 1993) and Designs for Active Learning: A Sourcebook of Classroom Strategies for Information Education (Gradowski, Snavely, and Dempsey, 1998). Though designed for use in information literacy instruction sessions, many of the games can also be used in staff training programs, particularly those designed for undergraduate student library assistants, with minor adaptations.

Game on!

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References


Preface

On campuses across the globe, instructors in disciplines from the natural sciences to the fine arts are increasingly turning to active learning techniques. As they do so, they discover that active learning activities, like the games in this book, have the power to enhance teaching, because the focus moves from the instructor to the students and to the material being introduced (where it belongs). As teachers are transformed from lecturers to facilitators, the students become the center of activity, working independently or in groups to master the material for themselves.

Teachers who transform their instruction in this way quickly discover what active learning proponents have been preaching for decades: using games and other active learning techniques in instruction is engaging and energizing for both students and faculty. Whether they’re played in person or virtually, research suggests that games have the power to engage learners, provide opportunities for practice, motivate participants, and otherwise enhance learning. That both the professor and students are energized and have fun while playing them is an added bonus.

As the librarians and professors of subject disciplines who have contributed to Let the Games Begin! Engaging Students with Field-Tested Interactive Information Literacy Instruction will attest, those instructors who use games to teach information literacy get good results. Whether playing Information Literacy Jeopardy!, using Library Mystery Orientations to orient students, or working with alternate reality games that center on the library, they are discovering the positive power of games to improve instruction! If you want to join the growing community of information literacy gamers, this book is for you!

Purpose

Let the Games Begin! offers 60 ready-to-be-played games contributed by librarians and professors in subject disciplines. The goals of this book are to help other librarians and instructors:

• liven up the classroom experience,
• provide practice in information literacy skills and concepts,
• increase classroom discussion,
• engage and energize both student and instructor,
• increase student motivation, and
• put the fun back into learning.

The games are not intended to replace traditional instruction totally. Instead, one short game (or more) can be added to liven up traditional learning techniques. For example, some of the games are 10- to 15-minute activities that can be used as icebreakers in anything from a single-shot orientation session to a semester-long class. Others can be used at the end of a class to provide an opportunity for skill practice or as a way to demonstrate student mastery of concepts or processes. Some games are longer and take up an entire class period. These might be used individually or in a sequence where one builds upon another. Some of the digital games can be used after a class period to provide instruction and/or test mastery. Others can be played independently to provide instruction, offer practice, and even provide successful finishers with a certificate of completion that can be turned in to the instructor.

Content

The games included in Let the Games Begin! are proven winners. They have all been used successfully in college and university instruction by the librarians and English, history, business, and communications professors from across the nation who contributed them.

So what are games? In The Study of Games, Avedon and Sutton-Smith (1971: 2) note that one common definition of a game is “a form of play, amusement, recreation, sport, or frolic involving specific rules, sometimes
utilizing a set of equipment, sometimes requiring skill, knowledge, and endurance.” In *Fundamentals of Game Development*, Chandler and Chandler (2010: 1) define a game as “a play activity defined by interactive challenges, discernable rules, and attainable goals.” For the purpose of this book, a game is an engaging and enjoyable activity that challenges its players, addresses at least one of the ACRL (2000) *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*, and is designed around specific learning objectives.

**Organization**

*Let the Games Begin!* starts with “‘Everybody Wins’: Energizing Information Literacy Instruction with Educational Games,” a short literature review documenting the effectiveness of games and the benefits of incorporating games into instruction and how libraries are using games in instruction. This is followed by 60 games divided into 11 topical parts.

Each game includes the following 12 elements:

1. Title and Author
2. Introduction
3. Objectives
4. Information Literacy Competency Standards Addressed
5. Game Background
6. Audience
7. Time Required
8. Materials and Equipment
9. Preparation
10. Playing the Game
11. Evaluation
12. Tips for Introducing Subject Faculty to the Game

**Types of Games**

Part I, “Icebreakers: Engaging Games for Beginning Information Literacy Sessions,” is made up of games that can be used as icebreakers—from a classic *Jeopardy!* game to others that use online jigsaw puzzles and Tinkertoys to begin sessions. Part II, “Games to Energize and Engage in One-Shot Library Orientation Sessions,” includes games to use in one-shot library instruction sessions, from a library mystery orientation or a game in which students discover library places and services on their own and report back to the *Information Literacy Game* and *Nightmare on Vine Street* digital games that students can play by themselves or with others.

Part III, “Organization of Information Sources Games,” includes contests that deal with the organization of information sources, addressing topics from call numbers to the theory behind library classification systems. Part IV, “Research Races and Processes Games,” offers challenges in which students race to see who can find facts most quickly on their cell phones, participate in a *Research Relay*, or be named the *Biggest Researcher*. Part V, “Online Search Techniques Games,” is next. It includes games in which students play cards or demonstrate their understanding of Boolean search operators and find the “Just Right” terms for their searches. In Part VI, “Evaluating the Quality and Authority of Information Resources Games,” students address quality issues of sources in a variety of ways, from a *Trivial Pursuit*-like game to one that mirrors *Truth or Consequences*.

Games in Part VII, “Bibliographic Citation Games,” address the important topic of appropriate documentation of resources; games include the *MLA Obstacle Course* and *Citation Races*. In Part VIII, “Plagiarism Awareness and Prevention Games,” games address the difficult and sometimes intimidating issue of plagiarism awareness and avoidance with games from *Plagiarism Busters* to the award-winning digital games *Goblin Threat* and *A Planet in Peril: Plagiarism and clicker games such as *Fun with Plagiarism*.

Part IX, “Finding, Identifying, and Discovering the Significance of Primary Sources Games,” includes games that invite students to work with digital and physical primary sources whether searching for information on the Internet for *Ellie Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Archives*, using the World Digital Library in *Where in the World*, or identifying and finding the significance of primary resources in *What Am I?* Part X, “Games to Assess and Wrap Up Information Literacy Instruction Sessions,” offers a series of games that can be used as culminating activities at the end of a class or a semester, including using the Internet tool Wordle, and requiring presentations in the *Three Cs*.

Finally, in Part XI, “*LOST in the Academy*: Library Orientation Session Techniques Help Students Navigate New Territory,” the *LOST in the Academy* series of six interwoven games take students from library orientation in *A Treasure Map*, through discovery and evaluation of resources, to an overview of the research process in *How Not to Find It Fast in the Library*. The book concludes with “Game On,” which offers a few tips on how to get started with games and
a short annotated list of articles, books, and websites to assist the would-be gamer to get started.

The games included here have been crafted to create energy and excitement in the classroom and result in learning while avoiding frustration, stress, and disappointment. When teachers and learners play *these* games, everyone wins.

**References**

