

2-7D Embedding Play in Higher Education

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Wisdom begins in wonder or so Socrates teaches — however embedding *wonder* in the fast-paced environment of Higher Education can be challenging. This session will discuss the benefits and challenges of cultivating playfulness in small-group settings on courses with a large teaching team through traditionally styled (and low-tech) games. The student interactions exist in a game dynamic that is 'separate from the real world' (Moseley and Whitton, 2015). Time spent in class maximises the focus on learning and, by in-game reflection on the dynamics of the playful interactions, is both a spring-board for improvised directed discussions of learning outcomes, and a formative assessment tool to personalise the class to the needs of the individual and group. In addition to showing extremely high levels of student satisfaction, the creation of safe, playful and failure-friendly learning spaces gently shifts time in class towards a student-focused and student-centred experience at a pace defined by the group.

This presentation will expose innovative use of games in the promotion of active cooperative learning in the mathematics classroom. The author will discuss the planning and preparation involved in creating and leading a session built around the effective use of games to develop wonder. Through sharing student and tutor feedback and observations, the impact of this introduction to the classroom on student engagement and future teaching methodologies will be considered. Participants will leave this session with the tools to take forward the lessons learnt and embed playfulness in their teaching through the use of games. With little adaptation, the author believes these innovations can be successfully applied across other disciplinary contexts.

References

Whitton, N. and Moseley, A. eds., 2012. Using games to enhance learning and teaching: a beginner's guide. Routledge.
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