



Review

Let the Games Begin! Engaging Students With Field-Tested Interactive Information Literacy Instruction

Theresa R. McDevitt, Ed. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2011. 205 pp. ISBN: 978-1-55570-739-2. \$70.00.

Reviewed by Erin Payton
Head of Instruction, Library Services
Central Piedmont Community College
Charlotte, NC

At some point every instruction librarian has taught a class filled with bored, blank-faced students. And most librarians have had the experience of planning for a class and feeling a sense of *deja vu* when lesson planning—as if they’ve taught this class a thousand times before. So, what’s the answer to engaging both students and ourselves when preparing to teach another information literacy class? Games! Educational games are a great way to engage students in one-shot or for-credit library classes. *Let the Games Begin!: Engaging Students with Field-Tested Interactive Information Literacy Instruction* offers 60 ready-to-play games that have been used and perfected by academic librarians.

The book organizes the games into 11 chapters and covers such diverse areas as ice-breakers, library orientations, citations and plagiarism, the research process, evaluating sources, online search techniques, and assessment and instruction session wrap-up. Each game includes the same elements: learning objectives, time required, audience, ACRL information literacy competency standards, the background of the game, how to

prepare and play it, evaluation tips, and ways to introduce the game to faculty. The book is laid out in a simply structured and very readable way.

The games include a wide variety of styles from elaborate physical scavenger hunts to online board games, clever uses of social media tools like YouTube and Twitter, and even old-fashioned card games. While some librarians might feel hesitant to jump into adding a game to their lesson plans, the book has games at all comfort levels from the beginner (e.g., having students create word clouds to demonstrate learned library skills in Game 52, "Winning Wordles") to the more advanced (e.g., create a treasure hunt around the library in Games 55-60, "Lost in the Academy.") It also includes games with those comfortable with technology (e.g., having students use Twitter to tag information in Game 25, "Twitter and Tagging Your Research Paper") and those who are looking for something a little more classic (e.g., having students face off to reinforce their online searching skills, "Family Feud" style, in Game 24, "Research Feud.")

The conclusion of the book includes helpful ways to get started, a list of excellent library gaming articles, and a very useful appendix of ACRL information literacy competencies that are addressed by each game. The only suggested addition for future editions would be to include additional appendices by game, range of time spent (e.g., 0-15 minutes, 15-30 minutes, 50-60 minutes), or audience (as there are some games that are geared specifically for certain subject matter or audience types).

It's important for information literacy librarians to keep their teaching material fresh, engaging, and innovative, and that can be challenging in one-shot classes (credit-bearing classes have more leeway with time to cover needed material.) *Let the Games Begin!* has a terrific and creative mix of games that would appeal to librarians and students alike. Information literacy classes provide terrific opportunities, even within a limited time frame, to try new activities and to engage students in a way that isn't dry or stagnant. Educational games linked to specific learning objectives are proven to get students to learn information literacy skills in an active, motivating, and energizing way. Overall, this book is a terrific and useful addition to the library game canon.

©2012, E. Payton. *Journal of Library Innovation* is an open access journal. Authors retain the copyright to their work under the terms of the following Creative Commons license: Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 (United States)
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/us/>