Play in Higher Ed

Lunch with EDNA - November 20, 2024
Mabyn Grinde, Lakeland College

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ASKĪYIWIMAMĪHCĪTOTAMOWIN

(Land Acknowledgement) - The act of Acknowledging the Earth (Land)

Here at Lakeland College, we acknowledge that the land we gather on is the traditional homeland, hunting, and ceremonial gathering places of the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit. The Plains Cree, Woodland Cree, Saulteaux (So-Toe), Blackfoot, Métis, Dene (De-Nay), and Nakota Sioux (Sue) people have practiced their culture and languages on Treaty 6 and Métis Region 2 territories for generations and were the original caretakers of this land. Many First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples call this land home today and have done so for millennia. We would like to acknowledge the history we have created together on this land, and to be thankful for the opportunity to walk together side by side in friendship, learning from our past, and promoting positive relationships for the past, present, and future.

Written by Kiera Comeau, Samantha O'Reilly, & Ryan Powder, members of the Indigenous Student Advisory Committee

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Today we will...

1. **PLAY** – experience a high skill, low risk (online) task.

2. **EXPLORE** – why play is important to learning (in the classroom with students and for instructors)

3. **SHARE** – what you do to build connection and have fun in your teaching and learning spaces

Image - feeling comfortable enough to "floss". NFO, 2024

Sometimes, just getting students to play is the heart of playful pedagogy. We find that easy-to-learn and hard-to-master games give students a safe place to interact with the class and each other before we challenge them to play and learn together in more serious contexts. For the price of five minutes of play at the beginning of each online class, we earn trust, attention and connection that translates into real learning.

- Forbes, L. & Thomas, D. (2024).

Why Play?

- **More effective learning**

- **Saliency and neuroplasticity**

- **Improved group dynamics/ morale/ bonding**

- **More intrinsic motivation and curiosity**

- **Student Centered Learning**

Image - "playing" with the idea of gamifying course content via an escape room - ACIFA, 2023.

Benefits of play

- Adaptive
- Reduced stress/ anxiety
- Optimism/ lightness
- Problem solving/ creativity

Image - faculty, lab techs and student advisors "playing" for glory. May Learning Days, 2024.

Outcomes perceived as valuable by students

1. Increased self awareness
2. Enjoyment, pleasure, fun, laughter. Lightening UP!
3. Being challenged to use brain in new ways
4. Being pushed out of 'comfort zone'
5. Understanding 'essential/ transferable skills' better
6. Enhanced creativity
7. Connection to classmates
8. Increased class morale
9. Thinking differently, seeing others differently.
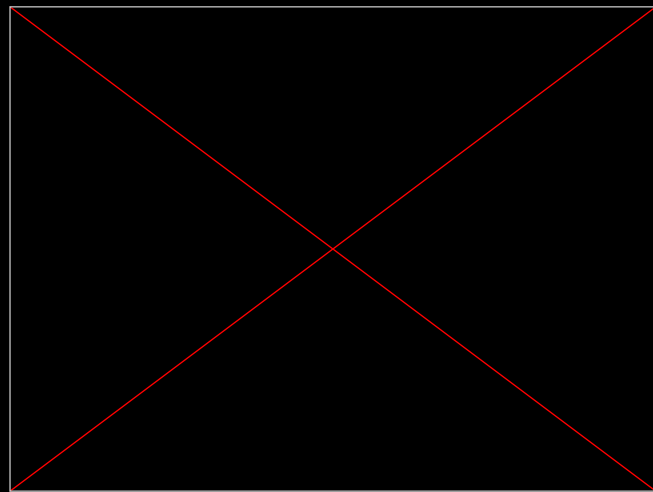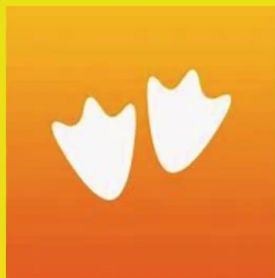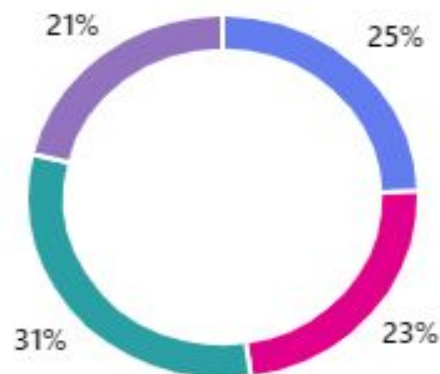10. Problem solving amid uncertainty.

HA! HA!

Hold space to play and (adults) will come!

1. 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

🔵	Sign me up for active fun in Vermilion	37
🔴	Sign me up for active fun in Lloydminster	35
🟢	I am interested in a quieter morning activity in Vermilion	47
🟣	I am interested in a quieter morning activity in Lloydminster	32

Lakeland College Teaching and Learning Commons • 2m

Playful Teaching and Learning Class Activities for Higher Education

Engaging and innovative activities to incorporate play in face-to-face and online college instruction

Concept Charades

Students work in small groups to act out complex academic concepts without words. Other groups need to guess the concept being portrayed. This activity works both in-person and online (via webcams). Great for reviewing key theories or processes while engaging kinesthetic learning.

Time: 20-30 minutes
Setup: Prepare cards with course concepts

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Add comment

Theory Battles

Students are assigned competing theories or approaches and must engage in a structured debate/battle where they defend their assigned position using evidence and course

Theory Trading Cards

Students create digital or physical 'trading cards' for key theories, scholars, or concepts in your field. Each card should include an image, key points, and 'stats' (like influence rating, complexity level, etc.). Students can then use these cards for various games and matching activities throughout the semester.

Time: Initial creation 30-45 minutes, ongoing usage
Materials: Card template, art supplies or digital tools

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Add comment

Meme Creation Station

Classroom Meme

Escape Room Challenge

Create a digital or physical escape room where students solve course-related puzzles to 'escape'. Can be done using Google Forms, physical locks, or escape room platforms. Each puzzle should relate to course content. Works great for both online and face-to-face settings.
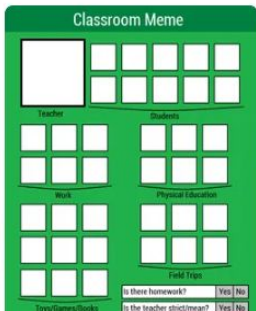
Time: 45-60 minutes
Prep: Create themed puzzles and challenges

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Add comment

Learning Jenga

Create a giant Jenga set (physical or virtual) where each block has a question or prompt related to course content. As students play, they must answer the question on the block they pull. Can be adapted for online

Content Creation Competition

Students compete in teams to create the most engaging and accurate educational content (video, podcast, infographic, etc.) explaining a course concept to their peers. Winners can be decided by class vote and best materials can be used as future learning resources.
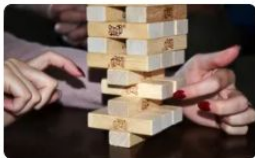
Time: 60-90 minutes
Tools: Various multimedia creation tools

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Add comment

Research Quest

Design a scavenger hunt-style activity where students must find and validate information using academic databases and resources. Can be done individually or in teams, either online or in person. Include challenges that require critical thinking and evaluation of sources.

Time: 45-60 minutes
Prep: Create quest challenges and verification system

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💡 Lakeland College Teaching and L...   18h
I've seen a variation of this from SAIT where it was an APA escape room created in google forms. Super cool!

Add comment

Concept Roulette

Create a digital wheel (or physical spinner) with course concepts. When the wheel lands on a concept, students must quickly explain it, provide an example, or connect it to another concept. Great for review sessions and can be adapted for online use using digital spinner tools.

Time: 20-30 minutes
Tools: Digital wheel spinner or physical spinner

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Add comment

Role-Playing Scenarios

Students take on roles related to their field of study and work through

Academic Improv

Students participate in improv activities where they must incorporate course concepts. F example, 'Expert Interview' wh one student plays an expert in field being interviewed about a random topic, incorporating co concepts. Works well both onli in-person.

Time: 30-45 minutes
Prep: Prepare scenario cards a concept lists

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Add comment

Concept Map Racing

Teams race to create the most comprehensive concept map connecting course ideas within time limit. Can be done with ph materials or digital concept ma tools. Add excitement by havir

Alberta Dream Crew

Alberta Champions

Image made in ChatGPT
Songs created in SUNO AI

Thank You!

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Image created in ChatGPT 4.0

Image - Faculty playing with improv games for learning, August 2024).

Eeek…. these ideas are SO GREAT!

- **Suno** - for making online songs/ music
- **Draw a Perfect Circle** & **Play Flappy Bird**
- **Professors at Play** - download the Playbooks, read them, love them!
- **Goosechase** (create an educator account for 5 free "players" and create teams)
- **Padlet of Ideas**
- **Creative Acts for Curious People: How to Think, Create, and Lead in Unconventional Ways**

WITH AI GENERATED ART!

Professors at Play
AI PlayBook

A Micro Publication

BY DAVID THOMAS AND LISA FORBES

PROFESSORS AT *Play* PLAYBOOK

Real-world techniques from a more playful higher education classroom

EDITED BY LISA FORBES & DAVID THOMAS