

Today I am excited to be able to publish a guest post from a good friend of mine, Rob Alvarez Bucholska. We speak regularly and he is a great gamification educator. Here he speaks about how he uses storytelling in materials he creates for the IE Business School in Madrid. Enjoy!

A while ago, Andrzej Marczewski wrote “[6 Tips for Short Term Gamification](#)”, and there is one that stood out for me because of my experience creating interactive learning materials at IE Business School. As you might guess from the title it is about narrative and storytelling. What I’ve done in the past are learning materials that, purposefully, are short bursts of learning for students. They are designed to be completed in 90 minutes or less. If you consider the typical gamified product, where you are normally looking for medium to long-term [engagement](#), it is easy to see that there might be many strategies that don’t apply here.

I found myself implementing several of the ideas that Andrzej proposes in that post before I read it, but particularly resonated with storytelling ([here](#) and [here](#) you can find some more ideas on narrative by the same author). You see, I’ve found that storytelling and narrative can be particularly compelling for the type of interactive learning that actually has a limited amount of time to interact with. A story or a number of stories, if well crafted, have the capacity to immerse each learner in the place that you have created for them to experience. Purposefully intertwining a narrative with exercises, feedback, interactive elements, video or other forms of presenting information greatly enhances not only the engagement, which is the reason for creating a gamified experience, but also the learning that is the “business objective” that comes when creating educational experiences.

With a great narrative, we’ve had students so hooked to their learning, that they’ve revisited materials time and time again to overcome challenges and get the full picture of a story. This, of course, deepens their knowledge and understanding of the topic, which, again, was the purpose of creating the learning material itself.

The fact that the learning experience is meant to last one hour and a half maximum is by no means a measure of the amount of time needed to create a compelling story, less so a gamified learning experience. These tips offered by Andrzej are very useful when creating short-term experiences, but they still require thoughtful design and careful crafting.

Interested in learning more about how these gamification elements, such as narrative and storytelling, can be used in education? I’d like to invite you to listen to Professor Game

Podcast. It can be found on [iTunes](#), [Stitcher](#) and [professorgame.com](#). Subscribe [here](#) and you'll have all the details. You'll find weekly interviews with gurus like Andrzej Marczewski as well as experts and practitioners, that will give you guidance and inspiration to use gamification and [game thinking](#) to multiply the learning and engagement in your classroom.

Rob Alvarez Bucholska

[@RobAlvarezB](#)

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