



Why Gorillas (and Games) are such good Teachers

Description

Games have always been excellent tools for teaching and learning. There are plenty of reasons why this may be, but for me, it comes down to one simple thing – they give **context** to the materials.

Let us for a moment take a simple example—projectile paths.

We could look at the equation

Let's say you launch a ball with an initial velocity of 20 m/s at a 45-degree angle. Using the formula

$$R = \frac{(20)^2 \cdot \sin(90^\circ)}{9.81}$$

$$R = \frac{400}{9.81} \approx 40.8 \text{ meters}$$

So, the ball will travel about 40.8 meters before hitting the ground.

Or, we could add context to the idea and play Gorillas instead, where we get to alter the velocity and angle of a player throwing a projectile at another player.

<https://github.com/HunorMarton/gorillas>

Obviously, the game is more fun. We are learning about how velocity, launch angles and gravity all work to create parabolic projectile paths in a fun way. Do you learn everything? No, but it gives context to the formula and brings it to life.

You can start understanding how to apply the formula by getting this context. To improve the learning aspect of a game like this, you could add a real-time version of the formula to the game that updates as you change variables, so you can see how it all fits together, but you get the idea.

Another example of this would be learning Civil War history by playing games that recreate those battles. You could learn geography and geopolitical theory from Civilization, city planning from Sim City etc.

The opportunities are endless!

So when you look at games and gamification, consider how you add context to the facts, information or whatever else you are trying to get people to engage with, to make them more interesting and cement the knowledge.

Category

1. Education
2. Gamification

Tags

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