

Gee's Learning Principles of Good Games

Playing games and learning in an engaging classroom have many similarities. However, there are some aspects of the traditional classroom that can't be reached through typical pedagogy, but can be achieved by using educational games. From watching Gee's, 'Principles of Learning' (Gee), I was able to sift out the principles of 'good games' that could enhance the learning experience of my students. While watching the video, I chose three of Gee's principles to discuss. Below, I have included a chart that names, defines and discusses these principles and how they relate to me as a learner. Many of Gee's principles, in my opinion, fall under the umbrella of 'best practices'.

Principle	How it relates to me as a learner
<p><u>1. Customization</u></p> <p>Customization refers to how different players in a game will approach problems and tasks differently. As the player becomes familiar to the game and continues to solve problems in a typical manner, new challenges may appear that might challenge the user to approach them from a new angle. Inside of the game, players can take risks and they are invited to try a new style of problem solving. In this case, the cost of failure is low because the risk that they are taking isn't happening in front of their peers. They are playing in the game as an avatar and therefore, confidence can grow and risk taking practices can happen.</p>	<p>As a learner, this aspect of Customization appeals to me. It can be hard to take risks and try something new if you are worried about being judged by others. Another reason that customization is a positive aspect of gaming is that new ways of tackling problems can occur without even being aware of them. It's easy in a game to see that your current strategy isn't working because your turn is ending or your character continues to die. It's harder in life to see that repeating the same actions will result in the same outcomes. Hopefully, as players continue to engage in gaming, they will take new approaches to problems in the actual world.</p>
<p><u>2. Pleasantly frustrated</u></p> <p>Pleasantly frustrated discusses the level of difficulty that the player is engaged in to solve problems so as to move on to the next level. The task at hand for the player needs to be challenging but not so overwhelming that the player becomes aggravated and wants to leave the game. Typically, the game uses information or skills from previous levels so that the information can be pulled back in as a resource, yet there is a twist to the problem that requires a new approach. The player should feel a sense of struggle which will then create a sense of flow. At the end of the level/task, the player should feel a sense of achievement that came from applying oneself.</p>	<p>Pleasantly frustrated is the zone that I prefer to work when working on tasks or problems. I don't want the problem to be so simple that I can solve it immediately but at the same time, I don't want to feel that the task is impossible, with my set of skills, to solve. It's like reading a good mystery novel- you need just enough clues to solve the crime before you get to the end of the book but not so many that you've solved it within the first chapter.</p> <p>I also find that when I am pleasantly frustrated, it creates a sense of 'flow'. I lose track of time and I want to see the problem solved to the end before I move on to anything else. The problem has my sole attention and I become very focused and determined to see it to the end.</p>
<p><u>3. Fish Tank</u></p> <p>Fish Tank falls under the category of problem based learning. This principle discusses the level and complexity of problems that should be developed for students. The analogy in the video explains that the entire ecosystem of a lake might be too complex to study as a whole, but if it is chunked down into smaller pieces, like a fish tank, then the problem becomes more manageable. Once the problem is solved on a small scale, the hope is then to take that solution and see if it applies to the larger picture.</p>	<p>As a learner, some problems seem to big at first glance and therefore, become too confusing. The student doesn't know where to start or how to approach the issue. The Fish Tank principle breaks the problem down to smaller, more manageable pieces. As a post-secondary student, there were many times when I was asked to solve the 'big picture' problem. I felt lost and I didn't have anywhere to turn to for assistance to get things started. Had the problem been simplified, I could have felt more confident in my learning.</p>