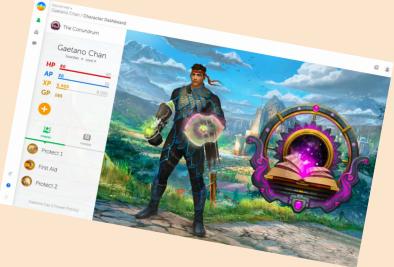
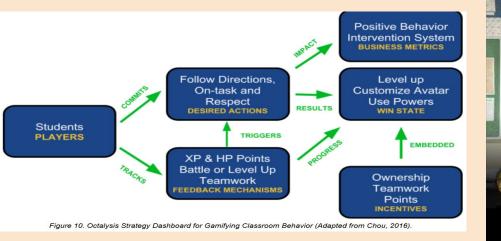
Does the Gamification Platform *Classcraft* Improve Behaviour and Productivity in Online and Face-to-Face Classrooms?



OLTD 508 Greg Lewis Inquiry Project October 19, 2020 Michelle Watrin

What is Classcraft?



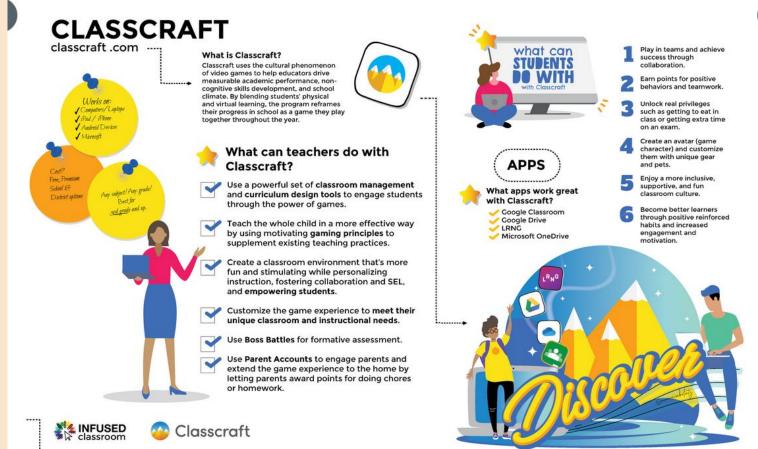


(Konicke, 2017)

Classcraft is a gamification platform that rewards students for targeted teacher-programed behaviours and work habits, while instilling collaboration skills through teamwork. It uses student avatars that can 'level up' and has the option to put entire class units into a QUEST format. It uses game design to enhance the learning experience.

Classcraft In a Nutshell

(Classcraft, 2020)



Setup: infused.link/playlist

designed by empowerdesigns



Guiding Question:

Can <u>*Classcraft*</u>, a platform that uses gamification, improve behaviours and productivity in face-to-face and online middle school classes? I problem I have is that students frequently turn in work late, and I need to 'chase them down' to get their work turned in. I am hoping this program can help with that in both online and face-to-face classes.

Gamification- the application of typical elements of game playing (e.g. point scoring, competition with others, rules of play) to other areas of activity, typically as an online marketing technique to encourage engagement with a product or service.

CLASSCRAFT



In this presentation I will:

- 1. Explain how gamification in Classcraft works
- 2. Explain my personal experience with Classcraft
- 3. Present statistics and other teachers' anecdotes to Classcraft
- 4. Express my next steps and what I want to learn about Classcraft



1. Gamification in Classcraft

The video is from the World Gov Summit of 2017 and explains that gamification of classrooms should work with existing curriculum with a goal of increasing student engagement.

In a gamified classroom, students must also have **the freedom to fail, experiment, try on different identities, and effort.**



Gamification in Classcraft

Gamifica- tion should:	work with existing curriculum with a goal of increasing student engagement.	provide the student the freedom to fail.	provide the student the freedom to experiment.	provide the student the freedom to try on different identities.	provide the student the freedom for effort.
How Classcraft has does this in my class so far:	It took a somewhat dry unit of Canada elections with high volume of learning in a timeline to the election and gave points to students for finishing steps (assignments) and fun 'Boss Battles' for teams in a QUEST atmosphere.	If students lose all HP health points for misbehaving in class or missing a due date, they commit to a pledge (consequence) to complete to gain HP back.	Students can use special powers of their avatars to help out other teammates with their HP points.	Students choose between a warrior, healer, and mage avatar.Avatars can earn new armour and holiday wear with XP experience points.	The more the students do for their team with their powers, or send 'kudos' to other students, the more the 'level up' to earn new powers and clothes for their avatar.

2. Personal Experience in Classcraft



2. My online class is made of students isolated in need of more of a feeling of community which I hope would be addressed by working on a team.

Two reasons I decided to try Classcraft:

1. My face-to-face class is made up of 22 loud, fun, and energetic grade eight boys and 8 shy, quiet girls who need to grow their confidence.



Discovering Classcraft

While discovering more about classroom gamification in OLTD 508, I stumbled upon the platform Classcraft. Living with preteens and teenagers who are active gamers, I was intrigued with the idea of gamifying my curriculum for my grade eight students in Clayburn Middle School. I am currently teaching 30 students face-to-face and 22 students online in the transitions program.

Classcraft offers a way to gamify **classroom management** as well as **curriculum**, and I wasn't sure I needed help with classroom behaviour or if I agreed with punishing students' teams by taking away points. To me, this seems to have the potential to put the students who act out in a place where others could be upset with them because their team lost points- a method that follows Skinner's theories of behaviour. After setting up my classes, I definitely focused on putting the **curriculum** into a game first.

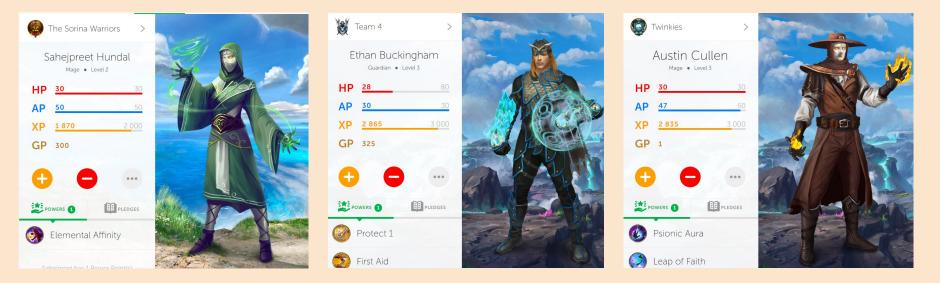
I created two classes, one for my face-to-face class and one for my online class.





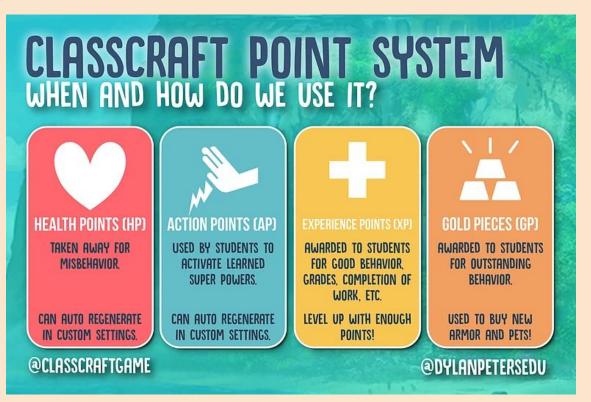
First Steps

During setup, I was able to choose which type of class I was making, face-to-face or online. Each type of class came with appropriate behaviour bonuses (Example: online students: 125 XP for coming to class meetings on time). I easily imported my students from Google Classroom, and then created teams for the students to be on before they entered. Students spent about 30 minutes in class creating their avatars choosing: Healer, Warrior, or Mage; male or female; skin tone...as well as team crests and backgrounds. Gee (2013) highlights customization as a key principle in empowering learners.





How Classcraft Points Work



• Health Points (HP)

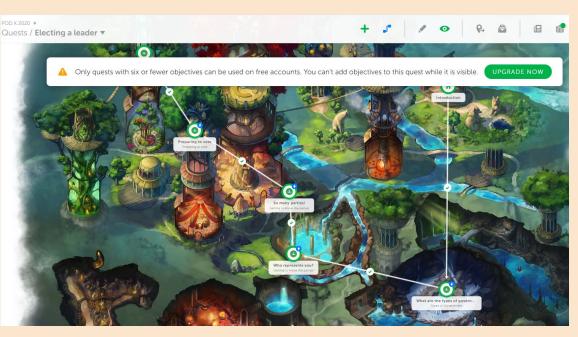
- Everyone starts with 100%
- \circ Lost when they misbehave based off of classroom rules
- If all are lost, they fall in battle and face consequences
- Regenerate 1 point per day (can be customized)
- Can also be lost during random events and boss battles
- Action Points (AP)
 - Used to activate a superpower
 - Can regenerate 2 per day (can be customized)
 - Often called Mana, the Mage can transfer AP to other teammates
- Experience Points (XP)
 - Awarded for good behavior, completed assignments, boss battle wins, and quests
 - $\,\circ\,$ When they hit a certain number (customizable), they level up
- Gold Pieces (GP)
 - \circ Awarded for leveling up, quests, boss battles, and good behavior
 - Can be used to customize their character

(Peters, 2017)



My first QUEST

The front-end loading for the teacher of this platform is quite huge. I decided to put my unit on BC Elections into a QUEST I named 'Electing a Leader.' It took a few hours to write and create my classes' first QUEST due to the huge learning curve for me. I'm sure this will get easier as I create more and more QUESTS. Electing a *Leader* simply linked each task to an assignment in our Google Classroom and, in this case, worksheets and charts and videos from CIVIX for the kids to complete. It soon became apparent there would be no 'pleasantly frustrating' tasks as defined by Gee, but just normal assignments they would have done anyway in pre-existing curriculum. The difference is the points they would earn for their avatar after each task is turned in.



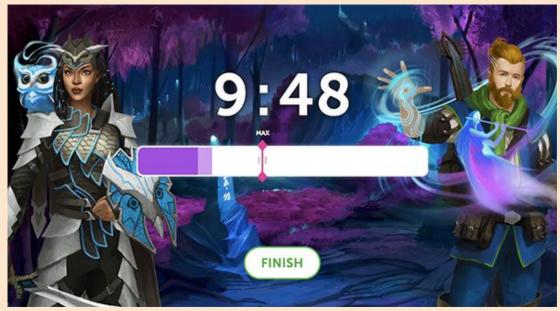
The QUEST building is teacher-friendly as you put steps anywhere on pre-made maps and can link to work in Google Classrooms.



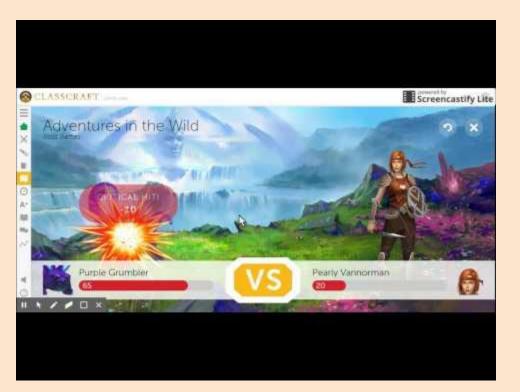
A Few Days In

The students earned XP experience points for completing tasks in the QUEST on time, and more points if they turned them in early. If they didn't finish and turn in assignments on time, they would lose HP Health points.

Just trying things out, during a work block with my face-to-face class, I used a *Volume Metre* feature for students to earn more XP if they kept the classroom under a certain loudness. The boys LOVED this, and lots of quiet "shushing" went on. When I clicked FINISH and they all received 100 XP, a huge cheer (defeating the purpose a bit :) went up. I began to see how the behavioural features could work in face-to-face classes.







A highlight for all students has become the Friday Boss Battle that I create as a review of the week's learning. The video shows how random students (I use random teams) can participate in a battle with a fantasy creature. If a team answers correctly, they receive XP. If they answer incorrectly, they lose HP, but participants on the team have options to use their powers to protect each other.

Reminder, if a student loses all HP and 'fall', he or she must commit to a 'pledge' and compete a consequence such as: "make a comic strip to show what you could have done better," or "make a Google Slide showing a goal you have." When completed, they receive HP from the teacher.

Both face-to-face and online students really enjoy these battles and reminded me of them on Thursday this week. "Don't forget tomorrow is a Boss Battle!"

Leveling Up

With the free version of Classcraft, students are able to 'level up' as they work through QUESTS or earn points for good behaviours or win points in a Boss Battle. I noticed right away that some kids were all about the 'leveling up' when they had an extrinsic reward for finishing work. As they level up they have access to more outfits and special powers for their avatar. If we had a premium version, at each level they could acquire new pets that also earn them XP points.

I have done the same unit in the past on elections in Canada, and although the worksheets and graphs are important to learn about the ins and outs of Canadian government, they can become tedious. I noticed more motivation to complete these tasks this year than I had in the past when the students did not have the chance to level up by turning in assignments. Only 2 out of 30 face-to-face students failed

to complete the unit on time, and 3 out of 22 online students failed to finish on time, which are great numbers and better than the past.

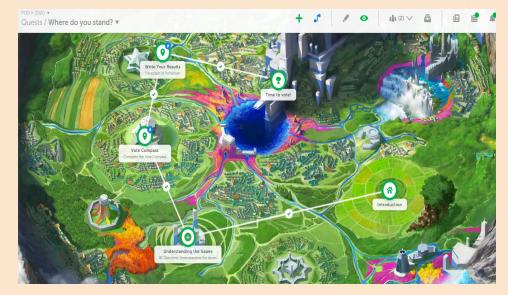
Moving forward I want to consider Gee's argument that good games allow users to solve problems in different ways. By allowing students to see how and when to use or not to use their super powers. I will allow them class time to collaboratively solve team problems in different ways, as well as ways to level up faster.

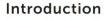


Quest #2: Where Do You Stand?

For our second QUEST I made sure that tasks did not always require a worksheet tied to Google Classroom, but some reflection and survey activities too so students would not just feel like a task had to be a worksheet. However, it is apparent that teachers could just plop worksheets in for each step of the QUEST if they wanted to.

The first QUEST took the students over a week to complete, and this one can be completed in two classes. We will start this one this coming week, and I want to compare how a shorter versus longer QUEST is received.





■ OVERVIEW

STORY

You have settled in the village of Abbotsford in the province of B.C. in the land of Canada. There are three types of government in this land: Municipal (city), Provincial (province), and Federal (nation). Your quest will be to learn about all three and to elect a representative for the Provincial government.

It was fun to create the path of the QUEST on the pre-made world maps. The 'story' of the QUEST took some time and creativity to write.



Students Started to Ask for More

By just having social studies classes on Classcraft and not including English, students started asking for more work on the program. After more research, I decided to start our Friday with a class tool called "Riders of Vey," a series of random challenges for the students. I researched how other teachers used this feature, and found that another teacher asked one of his students to assign an XP point total to be awarded if the event was completed as well as how many HP points would be taken away if students failed. I followed this teacher's lead, and projected the random event wheel on my front screen for students to see my spin. It landed on "students cannot use their thumbs for the rest of class." I have to admit, I thought the students would ask me to spin again, but to my surprise, they were all very much into this challenge! I will see what is programed for online "Riders of Vey" challenges and try to use them in Google Meets.

Class Tools

Use these tools to gamify your lessons. Find out more



The Riders of Vay Random Events



The Makus Valley Volume Meter



Holiday Costumes







The same day we did the no thumbs *challenge* was the same day the Halloween costumes came out. I realized I needed to let the students have some class time to play around with them. Again, I could not be able to monitor this with online students.



Student Feedback- What You Like about Classcraft?

Face-to-face students:

I liked the fact that you could give us challenges like not using your thumbs.

That we are in teams with our friends.

The game aspect of it makes it more fun like upgrading your outfit.

I like that it is something new. School is usually the same every day, so it is nice to have a change.

I liked how you can get more points for doing things around the class.

I like that we get to have teams and have fun. It's also cool to see how we level up and change equipment. I also like the battles and all the class tools.

I can see all my assignments in one place

Online students:

I like how you get to decorate your character the way you want and I love the backstory behind it. Classcraft was a pretty genius idea.

I like that you get to be a team and fight bosses.

I like how we have teams and avatars, and it's really nice to 'play' while school.

One thing I like about Classcraft so far is that it's pretty organized. It definitely helps keep you on track.

I like how we can buy equipment to customize the look of our characters.

It's usually a little bit difficult to find where we have to turn our stuff in some times but I definitely think I could get used to it.

I like that it's different from traditional learning.



What don't you like about Classcraft?

Face-to-face students:

That we can't actually control our characters.

I like an avatar to move around.

I wish it was like a video game and you have to finnish the quest to fight the beast with your team and like u don't have to answer those questons about classcraft. it would be fun if u could just fight the beast with your team after you do the quest.

I don't like that we lose points in Classcraft.

Is you could lose HP when even you didn't do anything.

That it is really hard to get GP

Your teamates can lose you health.

Online students:

It's usually a little bit difficult to find where we have to turn our stuff in some times but I definitely think I could get used to it.

The layout is messy, i find it hard to wrap my head around it.

I don't really like the system, because some of the assignments that you do don't show up on the Classroom.

I don't like how the delayed damage is so much. The total xp that is taken away is enough to make my character fall.

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3. Statistics and Other Teachers' Anecdotes on Classcraft

4

5 or more

Table 48: F2F Missing Assignments by Semester

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In Stacy Watson's 2018 doctorate thesis *Motivating* Students Beyond Classwork With Games and Gamification which looked at Classcraft with face-to-face and online students she recorded substantial research supporting the effectiveness of gamification in the classroom. "There has also been research done on online learning where games and gamification seem to have a positive impact on engagement. In an expansive survey of gamification and online learning, Looyestyn et al. [40] reviewed fifteen studies on the effect of gamification on engagement, as measured by time spent, volume of contributions and occasions visited to the software. Of these 15 studies, 12 studies found that gamified approaches had a significant positive impact on engagement in classrooms across numerous contexts from marketing to health awareness to education" (Watson, 2018).

Missing Non-Incentivized Semester **Gamified Semester** % Students Assignmts # Students % Students # Students 52.90%56 51.38%82 none 16 14.68%24 15.48%1 2 9 8.26% 15 9.68%3 9 8.26% 15 9.68%

5.50%

11.93%

0.65%

11.61%

1

18

Watson also did research on the effect of Classcraft (gamified semester) in face-to-face students turning work in one semester compared to the same work in another semester without Classcraft (non-incentivized semester). The results show the success of Classcraft when the teacher programed XP and HP for work turned in on time (Watson, 2018).



Some Proof Classcraft Can Work With Online Classes

"Teams in the face-to-face sections could strategize as a team at any point during class time and instructors largely left the teams to do so at their discretion. The online section, on the other hand, was provided with a weekly forum specifically for the purpose of strategizing about how to help one another and were required to post at least one time per week on this team forum in order to unlock the week's lesson. Also,I announced in week 5 that entire teams could earn XP bonuses for 'demonstrating awesome team collaboration' for making good strategic use of this discussion forum.Teams achieved this bonus by strategizing about how to use their powers to benefit the team as a whole," (Watson, 2018).

Table 50: Collaborative versus Individual Power Usage

Power	UOL	UOL	F2F1	F2F1	F2F2	F2F2
Type	# Uses	% Uses	# Uses	% Uses	# Uses	% Uses
Individual	146	26.74%	398	64.40%	138	55.42%
Collaborative	400	73.26%	220	35.60%	111	44.58%

Benefits of Gamification in Online Learning



This graphic enforces that gamification, such as Classcraft, can provide better online learning experiences for students, and can also prompt behavioural change. These are two outcomes I have been witnessing with my online students in that the atmosphere is more fun for them (as per online student feedback), and I have seen change in their habits of turning in work on time or early (EIDesign, 2016).



One Teacher's Warning

CommonSense Education has many positive reviews of Classcraft. However, this warning from 'Rayna D.' stood out for me, and it will be something I look out for as I continue incorporating Classcraft into my class.

"PLEASE don't use this product with your students. It is not a teaching tool- it is a reward and punishment system disguised as a cool computer game. I wish the creators would reconsider several aspects to this game so that it could actually be helpful for teachers and students. It will certainly cause your misbehaving students who struggle to control themselves to feel horrible about themselves. When students drag down their teams, Classcraft actually suggests putting those students alone in their own team. This does not help those students, it just further alienates them," (D,n.d.). (https://www.commonsense.org/website/classcraft-teacher-review/4142706)



Another Source Warning Games Can Be Manipulative

CommLab India has a belief that teachers should not "make extrinsic metrics or reward the main themes." Classcraft definitely encourages class rewards when students all reach certain guidepost levels.

CommLab's graphic also says teachers should try "not to manipulate the game." However, Classcraft gives teachers the ability to totally manipulate the game by changing the classroom behaviours that earn XP points according to what the needs are of the teacher in classroom management throughout the year. This is in agreement with the teacher on the previous slide that warns against Classcraft's manipulative ways (CommLab, 2020).





 When the teacher issues a command, students should follow the directions outlined on the first attempt. Currently, students are demonstrating an inability to follow teacher directions. When students fail to follow teacher's directions it slows down instruction and creates a challenging classroom environment.

Outcome	Exemplary	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
Follows Directions	Student followed directions. Student did not need any corrective action.	Student followed most directions. Student needed 1-2 corrective actions.	Student followed few directions. Student needed 3-4 corrective actions.	Student did not follow directions. Student needed 5+ correction actions.

Table 1: Following Directions Objective

Teachers at Lowe Middle School, including Nicole Konicke, spell out the specific behaviour habits they are trying to harvest through using Classcraft. While some teachers finds this tactic unethical, many others are happy to have a program that helps encourage proper classroom behaviour (Konicke, 2017).



4. My Next Steps

In my three weeks using Classcraft, I have experienced more buy-in with face-to-face students when I gave more class time to explore options for their avatar, a type of 'play in the sandbox' time according to Gee.

Although some of the online students have bought into Classcraft, without being able to guarantee more time to 'play in the sandbox' with the avatars, they don't seem to be experiencing the more enjoyable features although most like the organization.

Watson's doctorate thesis explained she found more success with online students when break out room time for teams was given to discuss strategies to work together to protect and 'heal' each other when dealt negative HP in Boss Battles, etc. She also had more success with students turning in work on time or early when she programed more XP and HP specifically for these tasks (Watson, 2018).



Programing specific rewards of XP that target desired behaviours needs to be an ongoing task on my part, and these will be different for face-to-face and online classes. The rewards can also be different week to week depending on what behaviours I want the students to work on.



What I want to learn about Classcraft

I have put in 20+ hours learning and researching Classcraft, and I feel like I have only touched the surface. I started following Classcraft on Twitter, and Tweets like this one intrige me. I know there are amazing pre-made, free QUESTS with backstories of the Classcraft world available. However, it takes time to go through the QUEST myself to see if it is worthwhile. I will get to the #QuestOfTheWeek someday.

Some teachers have had success having students write creative writing stories about their avatars. This may be fun as we move to NaNoWriMo (a platform for students to write a long story in November). Because of the success of Clascraft so far, I am going to try to make our NaNoWriMo experience into a QUEST as well.

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Classcraft

- @classcraftgame
- There is something terribly wrong in Verdalia ... Our #QuestOfTheWeek, "A Hero's Path - A Riders of Vay Story" sends Ss on an exciting adventure. Use Jason Howse's 5-stage story with any class or subject. bit.ly /2M4bqBQ #Education





Pre-Made Quests

I would also like to look through the hundreds of QUESTS shared in a catalog of freebies for teachers on the Classcraft website.

If there is a pre-made QUEST on something like figurative language or religions of the world, it would be a real time saver to just plop it into the classes' worlds.



Job Hunting

 Robert Tabor
 GRADE 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 1...



Bullying
Mr.Dave Mme.Anny
GRADE 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, ENGLIS.



Chinese Inventions Donna K @ GRADE 2, 3, ENGLISH LANGUAGE .



Holidays around our land Paul Richter © GRADE 2, 3, 4, GEOGRAPHY, SOCI...



A Tale of Brainiacs & Donna Burrell & GRADE 2, 3, 4, COMPUTER SCIENC..



A Hero Rises: Part One
Caleb Moore *GRADE 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, .*



Native American Heritage Rebecca Pittman Ø GRADE 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, ENGLISH LA.



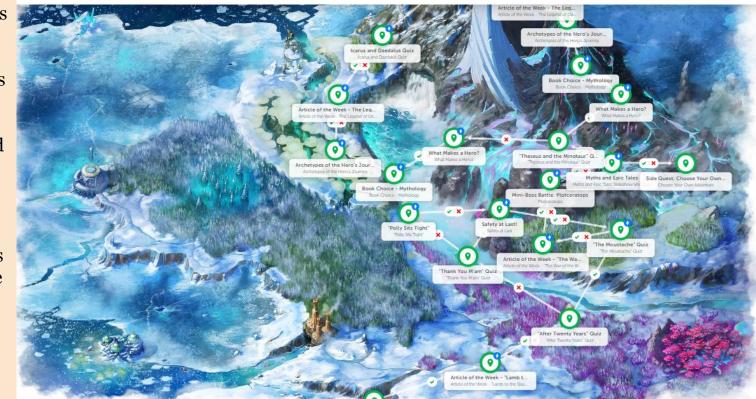
The Games! Michael Aponte *GRADE 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, SOCIAL STUDI*:



In more advanced **QUESTS** like this one in the premium version, students could have a bit of co-creation if a QUEST offered choices of which path (activity) they needed to do to advance in the QUEST. This feature would be nice to learn to individualize learning.

Inly quests with six or fewer objectives can be used on free accounts. This quest cannot be made visible.

UPGRADE NO



In Conclusion

In conclusion, I like that my students are enjoying Classcraft, and we are having more fun in the classroom, whether online or face-to-face. As we have become more familiar with Classcraft, student engagement in the classwork has increased. Often I have 100% student engagement as we work on QUESTS in class.

As I have said, even though I have put 20+ hours into learning and setting up this program, I still have a lot to learn. But for rolling this out only a few weeks ago, I am happy with my progress and most of my students' buy-in. My challenge is to use some of Watson's strategies to help the online students understand how to engage in Classcraft more than they are.

Overall, to answer my original guiding question, I have found more student motivation and an improvement in classroom behaviours when using Classcraft. Students are turning in their work on time and even early is some cases, which has made my marking easier. When I feel more familiar and at ease with the program, it should become less time consuming for me to set up new QUESTS. I will continue to gamifiy my classroom with Classcraft.



OLTD 508 Guiding Question

Can game based learning inform and benefit my teaching practices while offering alternative learning experiences for students?

Thought my in-depth inquiry into Classcraft and trying it out in my class, I can say without a doubt that game based learning is informing and benefiting my teaching practices by providing a new and fun approach to already existing units and lesson plans I have developed over the years. It is also definitely given my students an alternative learning experience through the Classcraft world in which they find their QUESTS, Boss Battles, and avatars with super powers.



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