



SCIENCE DISSECTED

Using Classroom Games as a Review Strategy

The end of the semester means it is time to review the information that was learned to prepare for final exams. Many teachers choose to aid students with the review process by providing them with a study guide. Classroom games are also an option to promote long-term memory review while engaging students.

Playing learning games is an excellent way to motivate students. As students play, they learn. Not only do students have fun learning and reviewing content material, but they learn how to cooperate and negotiate with others; games are also a powerful way to create healthy competition in the classroom, impacting the students' need for power and freedom.

"Fun is the genetic reward for learning. We are descended from those who learned more or better than others. The learning gave our people a survival advantage, and the need for fun became built into our genes." (The Quality School: Managing Students without Coercion, William Glasser, 1998, p.41).

Not only will games increase motivation, but they are an excellent way to engage and activate the brain. Using games that students are already familiar with provides the brain connections for a better understanding of content. They use the most basic level of active processing, creative rehearsal, and they appeal to a wide range of modalities. Every time students recall information from long-term storage into working memory, they relearn it.

Review Game Ideas:

Jeopardy Review & Who Wants to be a Millionaire - Games that reflect popular television shows are fun and require little direction because students are most likely familiar with the rules. Teachers can download PowerPoint templates from the internet and insert questions that are similar to the items on their exam.

Snowball Fight - The first step is to divide the class in half. Instruct the students to write a question, a vocabulary word, or a definition (without including the vocabulary term) that relates to the topic on a piece of paper. Then, the students wad up their paper and at the same time, throw it across the room (the snowball fight part). Each student picks up a paper ball and takes turns reading their question and answering it. Keep score to determine which side of the classroom wins.

ABC Review - Give each student (or pair of students) an ABC chart (a sheet of paper that has 26 boxes on it, each with the corresponding letter of the alphabet). Students write terms or associations related to the desired topic that begin with each letter of the alphabet. They should fill in as many boxes as possible. The student who lists the most related concepts wins! This game also works well as a pre-assessment tool for most topics.

Content BINGO - Students can create their own BINGO cards by randomly writing 24 vocabulary terms (25 terms if a free space is not allowed) that are provided by the teacher. The teacher will ask questions or state definitions that related to the terms written on the BINGO cards. The first student to have BINGO wins the game. Play again and make it interesting by playing four-corners or double BINGO.

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