

# MICHAEL MATERA

## How to Make Learning a Game

Website: [mrmatera.com](http://mrmatera.com) and [explorelikeapirate.com](http://explorelikeapirate.com)

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Book: [Explore Like a Pirate](#)

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A little bit about Michael....

- 6th grade world history teacher and presenter.
- Passionate about gamification and game inspired course design.
- Gamification:
  - Scalable (bite size or build out entire lessons/course).
  - Already within kids' comfort zones (set them up to learn in a way that they want to learn already).
  - Students approach and embrace challenge; they will even help to evolve the complexity of the game.
  - Layer that is being added on top; doesn't take away from what teachers are already doing.
  - Addicting and intriguing (in a good way)
    - Allows for choice.
    - Play is a natural way to learn.
    - Unfinished tasks resonate in our minds; better mental readiness from students.
    - Streaks are motivational.
- Examples of games in the classroom:
  - Mini-games keep all students feeling competitive.
    - [Explore Like a Pirate](#) gives about 25 examples of existing mini-games and "recipes" for building new ones.
    - Examples:

- Augment with a timer: Assign a task timed by the length of a YouTube video (for example, a time lapse photography of a sunset that is 10-15 minutes long)
  - Students earn poker chips by asking questions. Chips are used to take golf putts.
  - Trashketball
  - Classroom Olympics
  - Create Easter Eggs for students to find.
  
- When games are brought into a class....
  - Bonds between students via teams are created.
  - Life lessons are taught (managing deadlines, single chances, risk rich environment, winning/losing)
  - Opens the opportunity for even more challenging academic work because students see challenge as fun.
  - Creates opportunities for educators to create connections across lessons.
  - Games need to be motivational and inspiring but not too easy for students.
  - Allow for flexible design of lessons.
  - Students feel the growth within themselves because they care.
  
- By understanding the types of gamers in the classroom, teachers can design learning experiences better.
  - Types of gamers:
    - Socializer: Use their social network to benefit the game. The game is an opportunity for a shared experience.
    - Achiever: Wants the A (not necessarily to learn).
    - Explorer: Wants to understand the greater concept and have a broad understanding of the material.
    - Killer: Highly efficient.
  
- How big is the potential of gaming in the classroom?
  - As much or as little as you want.
  - Can serve as the background/theme for your classroom.
  
- The creative process for developing games in the classroom is part of the fun! Tips shared here are meant to be examples to get teachers thinking about how to bring games into the classroom.