

Teaching With Games





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Who I am/What I do

- ✗ I teach English (writing and literature) and Communication to students at a game-focused college just outside Seattle, Washington, USA.
- ✗ Most of our graduates build their careers in the video game industry or in the field of arts and animation, with many also working for “Big Tech” firms like Microsoft, Google, and Amazon.
- ✗ I started teaching in 1989, and have been working in the game space since 2008.



Challenges

- ✗ **Family concerns:** If students are playing, how can they be learning?
- ✗ **Social stigma:** Concerns about game violence, inappropriate content, etc.
- ✗ **The learning curve:** Some teachers and students are more technologically adept than others.
- ✗ **Access and accessibility:** Do all students have access to the necessary equipment and software? With appropriate accommodations, can disabled students participate?



Opportunities

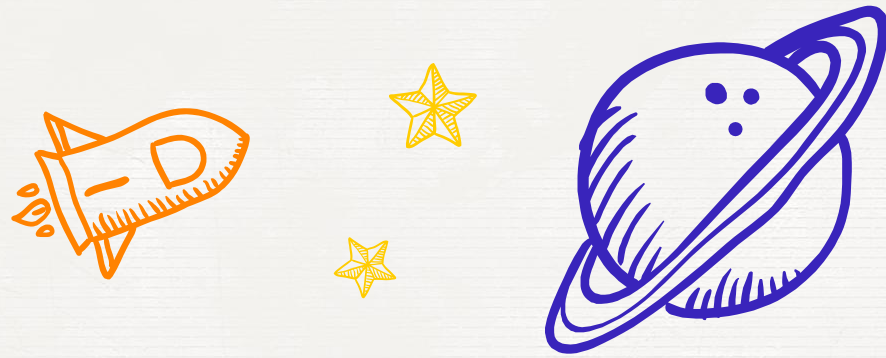


- ✘ Most students will engage eagerly with game-based learning, even when dealing with challenging subject matter.
- ✘ Interactive, game-based activities promote creative problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
- ✘ Game-based education encourages cooperative, pro-social behavior. (LOTS of research supports this!)
- ✘ Games help students learn that true mastery takes time and effort, and that a setback or failure means “keep trying!”

Some helpful resources:

- ✗ <http://www.gamesforchange.org>
- ✗ <https://seriousplayconf.com>
- ✗ <https://hevga.org>





Teaching with games is wonderful, but there's more!
Why not learn how to *make* games?!



Teaching with Narrative Games

- ✗ Significant improvements in critical thinking and problem solving skills can be achieved through creating (or having students create) short narrative games.
- ✗ Using **Twine** (free, open-source software), teachers can easily create point-and-click story games based on their own customized lesson plans.
- ✗ Teachers can even assign students to create these games themselves!



For example...

- ✗ Folk and fairy tales are excellent tools for teaching children (of all ages!). What if students could examine and change the choices made by the protagonists of these stories?
- ✗ Some of Shakespeare's characters make terrible choices. What if students could select (or even vote on) alternate possibilities and then examine the various outcomes?
- ✗ This interactive approach can also be a useful tool to support the study of history, the sciences, and many other fields. Practically anything that involves "what if?" questions can benefit from this approach!



This sounds like an awful lot of work...

- ✘ There's a bit of a learning curve, but it's not that bad! I taught myself to use **Twine** in about 2 hours, and I can't write code at all.
- ✘ You can keep it simple, or you can get really fancy! Fancy takes longer, of course, but you can work up to that.
- ✘ Once you know the basics, you will have endless opportunities to create engaging activities for your real-world or virtual classrooms.
- ✘ Watch out for "scope creep." (Set clear guidelines and boundaries!)

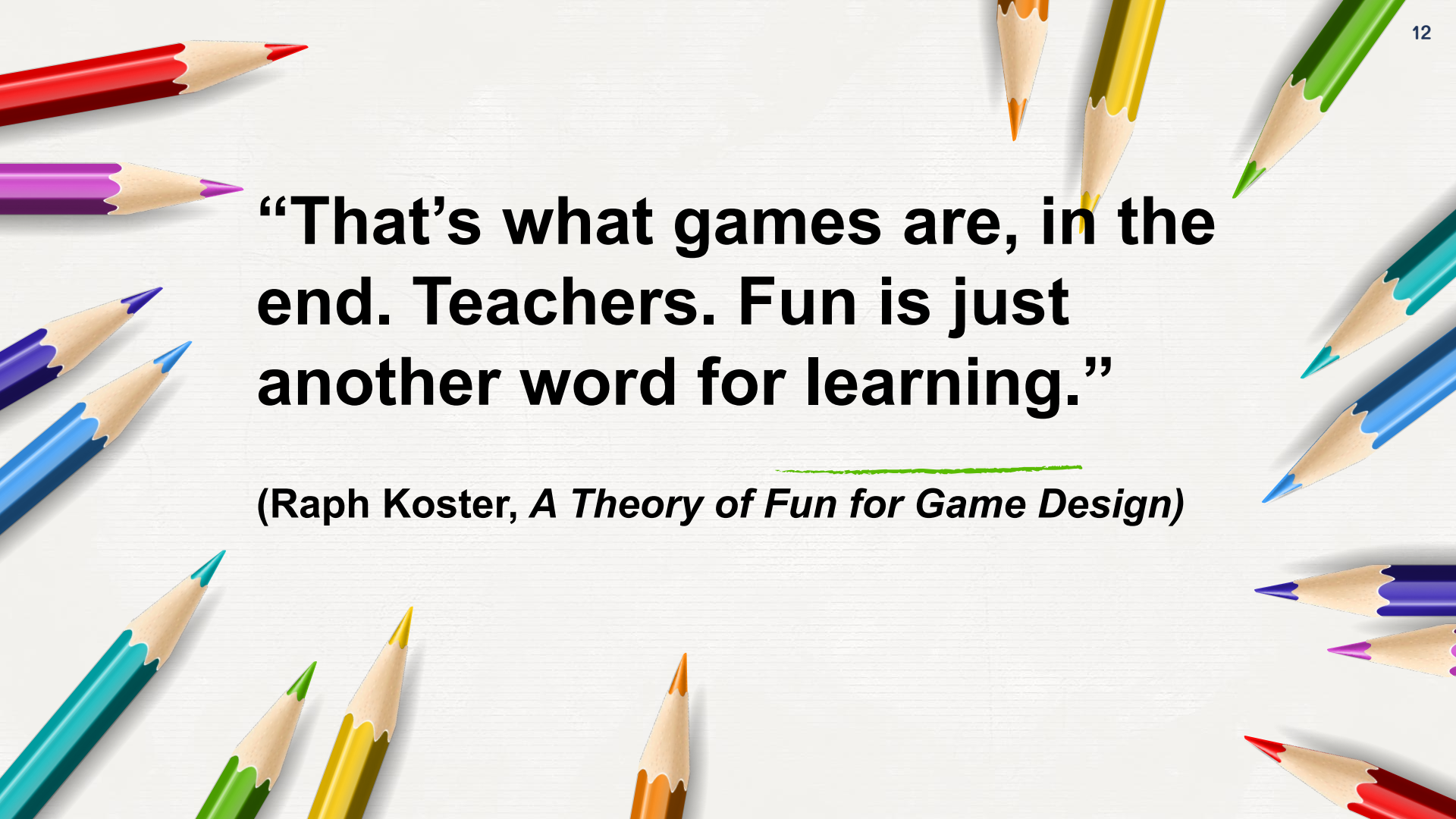


Getting started with Twine

Download the program from twinery.org
Bookmark

- ✗ The Twine wiki:
<http://twinery.org/wiki/start>
- ✗ Adam Hammond's Total Beginner's Guide to Twine 2.1:
<http://www.adamhammond.com/twineguide/>
- ✗ The Game Developers Guide to Twine:
<https://www.gamedesigning.org/learn/twine/>
- ✗ Twine Examples--Collection
<https://itch.io/c/314317/twine-examples>





“That’s what games are, in the end. Teachers. Fun is just another word for learning.”

(Raph Koster, *A Theory of Fun for Game Design*)

Thanks!

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