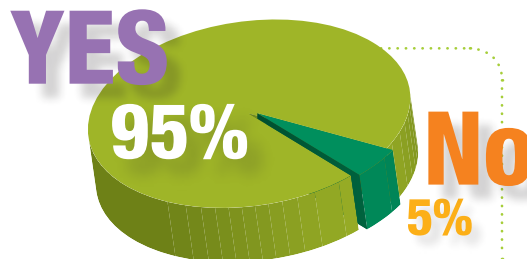


# READERS **respond**

## POLL RESULTS

### Can Games Be Used to Teach?

Overwhelmingly, you responded that games can be used as instructional tools. Although there were some qualifications, it seems we need to get a few more joysticks into the classroom.



#### Engagement Is Key

I would like to restate the question—can GAMING be used to teach? Then I would answer YES. Gaming can provide our students with engaging environments in which simulation, experimentation, and problem solving can be experienced. I have seen many high-quality gaming environments which would stimulate thinking, collaboration, and higher-order thinking.

*Paula R. Don, Director  
Educational Technology Group  
School District of Philadelphia*

#### History Says ... Yes

Absolutely. Historically, games have long been used in education, and some of today's teachers are creatively using computer games in the classroom. Lots more online information and resource links about computer games in the classroom are at our

Web site: <http://eduscapes.com/seeds/games.html>. These materials are open for others to use.

*Larry Johnson, PhD  
School of Library and Information Science (SLIS)  
Indiana University at Indianapolis  
Lamb Learning Group and Vision to Action Inc.*

#### Yes, But ...

Well, sure games can be used to teach, but that doesn't mean I support the widespread use of games as an instructional method.

The educational value and relevance to what is being taught are the important considerations. The teacher must be involved rather than using the game for entertainment.

*Gordon Roethemeyer  
Author of Game IT! with Excel*

#### Games Lack Feedback

No. I think the keyword here is teach. Games can be motivational, but true learning requires interaction with a teacher who sees what is (and is not) being done correctly. Feedback from computer games does not really analyze input and personalize how students should change their responses or behavior.

*Ms. Lynn Spencer  
Library Media Specialist  
Cherry Road School  
Syracuse, NY*

#### Life is a Game

Can we teach without using games? If you look at modern classrooms today, you see students working together in

collaborative teams to solve problems just like they would if they were playing games. Problem solving is really a contemporary game. If you think of card games we used to play for leisure in school and then look at the computer simulations we have today you can draw many parallels of ways to concentrate and problem solve.

*Bonnie Thurber  
Northwestern University  
Evanston, IL*

#### Everything Beautiful

Yes. I think anything that is authentic, accurate, creative, interesting, beautiful, unique, fun, and inspirational can be used to teach. As always, I don't think anything should take the place of an incredible teacher, but a combination of that teacher and any great resource or tool will help kids learn.

*Christine M. Lorenz  
Technology Director  
St. Matthew's Parish School  
Pacific Palisades, CA*

#### Challenges Rule

Games can most certainly be used to teach! Games provide motivation and can be tailored to a student's instructional level and get progressively harder. That is another reason why games are so popular. Because they continue to challenge the player.

*Gina Shelley  
Wasatch Mt. Jr. High  
Heber City, UT*

### Coming Next Issue in L&L

#### Measuring Up

A new generation of online assessments allows students to prove proficiency by completing tasks in their natural environment. Jennifer Roland examines several online technology skill assessment tools and how they correlate to ISTE's NETS.

#### Mentoring with Video

Technology tools that improve student learning can apply to teachers as well. Anissa Lokey-Vega and Laurie Brantley-Dias detail how they and their colleagues have integrated video into professional development practices.

#### The State of Online Learning

The use of online courses in Maryland schools has grown dramatically in recent years. John Sener and his colleagues explore the Maryland Students Online Consortium's work in providing procedures, guidelines, and training to facilitate online student learning.

**Correction:** In our April 2006 article, *Designing the New School*, we misidentified the laptops in the COWs. The COWs contain 12 Apple Macintosh laptops.