

Facilitate for Impact

Module 10 Transcript

Hello and welcome back to Facilitate for Impact where we're taking learning moments and turning them into lasting change. This is module 10. Let's be honest, sometimes adult learning needs a little spark.

And one way to add that spark is gamification using elements of play like points and levels and friendly competition to make the learning more engaging. But here's the trick. Gamification only works when it's done with purpose.

Otherwise, it's just fluff dressed up as fun. At its simplest, gamification means weaving game mechanics into non-game settings to make tasks more motivating. So think about how fitness apps give you badges for daily streaks or online learning platforms unlock new levels after each module.

Those are elements that nudge people the next place, helps them stay consistent and makes their progress visible. Now, gamification was first explored back in 2010-ish and everybody was doing it back then. And while the hype has cooled down some, the concept itself has not gone away.

It's just evolved. And now with AI and augmented reality, gamification is becoming smarter, more immersive, and more personal. So let's break down what works, what doesn't, and how to make it meaningful for an adult learner.

So let's start with the why not, because there are definitely pitfalls. It takes time and energy. Designing a truly effective learning game can take hours.

You've got to create it, test it, plan for backups in case it flops, and you absolutely have to have those backup options. It can miss the motivation mark. If you don't understand your learners, points and badges can fall flat.

Not everyone is wired to care about the leaderboard or the high score. Gamification leans heavily on extrinsic motivation. And we've already said that we know intrinsic motivation, that inner drive, that's what causes things to stick long term.

So gamification that only rewards the what without connecting to the why, that can kind of fade fast. It can sometimes oversimplify complex content. When we reduce deep topics to surface level playing, learners can maybe miss the nuance and miss the deeper meaning of what you're trying to convey.

It can also alienate people. If the theme doesn't resonate, engagement can tank. For example, I once attended a class built entirely around Harry Potter analogies.

Beautifully designed, but completely lost on me. I've never read the books. I've never seen the movies.

I didn't know what a quidditch was. I mean, the result was that I was confused. It was confusion, not connection that came out of that.

And I wasn't the only one. There were a whole group of us in this session that were just like, we checked out. As soon as they started making the Harry Potter references that we didn't get, we checked out.

And that's the danger. If the learner can't relate to your theme or your game, the learning gets lost in translation. When it's done well though, gamification can be incredibly effective.

It can boost engagement and enjoyment. Little play goes a long way in making learning more fun. Games can anchor learning in meaningful experiences, making it easier to remember.

Learners know right away if they've got something right or need to adjust. So it gives them immediate feedback and they don't have to wait till the end of the class or wait to try something out later to see if they got it or not. It allows self-paced progress.

Well-designed games will let your learners move at their own pace or their own speed, which supports that autonomy. And it encourages collaboration and accountability. Group games can build camaraderie and healthy peer learning.

So yes, gamification can absolutely work. The key is designing it for adults, not just adapting what works for kids. In order to make gamification meaningful and effective, we have to follow these three keys.

Relevance. The game must tie directly to a career or learning goal. If playing it doesn't help the learner perform better or grow their confidence or solve a real problem, it's just entertainment.

It's got to be adult-centric motivation. Adults want practical, relevant reward like immediate application or recognition or progress toward mastery. Most of them are not going to be motivated by cartoon trophies or bragging rights.

They're going to want something more relevant. And the game has to have clear, simple instructions. Confusion kills fun.

If you can't explain the rules in under a minute, it's probably too complicated. If they have to ask a hundred questions because you know what the rules are in your mind, but you didn't give enough details, it's probably going to be too complicated and fall flat. So think go fish, not dungeon and dragons.

And make sure the how to win piece is always crystal clear. Adults don't have much patience for murky rules or inconsistent enforcement. So gamification doesn't have to be elaborate to work.

It can be a quick quiz, a group challenge, a scenario competition. Those can be just as powerful as a fully developed board game. The goal isn't to make learners play, it's to make them engage.

We've talked about the importance of engagement. So if the play helps the learning stick, it's worth the effort. Learner prompt number 10 is going to help you think through your gamification strategy.

Start small, prototype it, test it, adjust it. You will be amazed how a little play can make a big difference if it's done well. Gamification again isn't about turning training into trivia, it's about transforming learning into an experience.

So when games connect a purpose, spark curiosity, and respect adult motivations, they don't just entertain, they engage, they empower, and they make learning unforgettable. And that's the beauty of focusing on gamification in your sessions. Now that's it for this module.

We will see you in module 11.