

Topic: Are Educational Games an Effective Use of Classroom Technologies?

Recently, the 120-year-old Holy Rosary School in Tacoma, WA USA installed huge computer screens in each of the classrooms. Students will be using handsets to interact with these smart boards. "I told my kids we're getting a giant iPad in our classroom," teacher Amparo Farias tells [KOMO 4](#) News Reporter Theron Zahn. "It's hard at this age to keep their attention, so having a smart board is going to be wonderful."

Indeed. While students interviewed say they think the super-sized screens may bring "some new spark" to learning, school administrators are hoping for a lot more: to revitalize and re-populate a declining enrollment.

Classroom technologies have long been important tools in a teacher's arsenal of attention grabbers since the days when record players and film projectors populated school storage areas. Technology brings with it an element of fun –why else would we call them tech toys?- and having fun around a learning experience is always a good thing. Why? Because relaxed kids are much more open to new ideas than stressed out ones. Just like adults.

So, are educational games an effective use of these classroom technologies? Let's turn the table around and look at this from the game's perspective.

One summer at science camp, Esther Novis, then a mother of five and a former Harvard-trained biologist, was looking for a way to make real science really interesting for her five-year-old son. Esther gets the idea for what she calls [The Young Scientists Club](#) –activities and games that pique a child's imagination with all things science in an approachable way. Esther's idea catches on with other parents, and soon she launches a subscription science kit service. Fast forward 11 years ... now The Young Scientists Club kits are mailed monthly to children everywhere, and sold in stores all around the world. The company has also been honored with [numerous awards and recognition](#) for games well played. And the kids, well –not only to they love the games, they love the science, too.

The Young Scientists Club does for science what educational games do for classroom technologies: They make it engaging.

It's All A Game

Is it more effective to learn complex math "problems" using fun math "games"? I bet. [Education.com](#) states "an interactive game is more engaging than a book, so technology often promotes more practice and review in areas requiring memorization, such as spelling, math and geography. This frees up time in the classroom so educators can focus on skills like problem solving, character development and critical thinking." (What about interactive books?)

These days, educators may be concerned that aptitude test scores may not be rising as fast or as far as their classroom technology budgets, yet the educational-tech-games advantage remains for personalized learning. It could even be argued that classroom technology and educational games are one in the same.