

STUDENT LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT THROUGH PLAY

Sprite's Quest is a 2D platformer game developed by the Ontario Ministry of Education to introduce students to concepts in physical and human geography. Through playing the game, students gain experience with the geographical features and relationships of real-world locations.

Teachers reported that the game:

- was **highly engaging** for students
- was accessible to a group of students with **multiple learning needs**
- appealed to a wide range of **learning styles**
- allowed students to access material using an **immersive format**
- served as an **additional text** for students to read and reference as a part of a larger unit

It was evident through classroom observations and conversations with teachers and students that students were learning while playing *Sprite's Quest*.

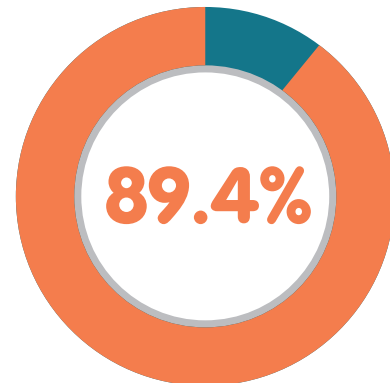
Nearly 9 out of 10 students think videogames can be good learning tools.

"They're learning research skills because they're not only researching through their findings playing Sprite's Quest, but they're also going to be researching additional information on the internet."

"My students were engaged in Sprite's Quest. They loved the game!"

"Gaming really lends itself to differentiated instruction."

"We have such a high-needs group in our class. The game really levelled the playing field. We had one student who is really struggling in school academically, and we put this game in front of him, and all of a sudden he was a leader in the classroom."



Over the course of the Playing to Learn project, researchers discovered that students and teachers alike were excited by the prospect of learning by way of a videogame. In fact, nearly 90% of the students who participated in the student surveys reported that they believe videogames are good teaching tools. Teachers agreed, so long as games are connected in meaningful ways to subject-specific and cross-curricular learning objectives.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

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- Walsh, C. (2010). Systems-based literacy practices: Digital games, research, gameplay and design. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 33(1), 24-40.