



# Game On!

# Creative Gamification in the Library

Presented by: Caitlin Connelly, Adele Conway, and Christine Stevenson

SMJC Library @ Georgian Court University



## About Us



Caitlin Connelly is the Collection Services and Electronic Resources Librarian, and University Archivist.



Adele Conway is the Systems, Metadata, and Emerging Technologies Librarian.



Christine Stevenson is the Outreach and User Engagement Librarian.

## About Georgian Court University

Founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1908, Georgian Court University is a private, liberal arts institution guided by the Mercy Core Values and a special concern for women.

1,491 undergraduate students  
399 graduate students

40% first-generation  
33% of undergraduate population is residential

(“About Georgian Court,” [georgian.edu](http://georgian.edu))



What is  
Gamification?



# Gamification and the Library

“Gamification, or the application of game elements and digital game design techniques to non-game settings, and game-based learning, or game playing that has defined learning outcomes, are seeing greater adoption and recognition in educational and professional settings.”

-American Library Association’s Center for the Future of Libraries, 2015

**Game elements and design techniques** like:

- Points
- Badges
- Levels
- Leaderboards
- Narratives



**Library skills and resources** like:

- Information literacy
- Using the catalog
- How to find a book
- Navigating the library
- Library spaces



An enhanced user experience that is more engaging, interactive, and flexible than traditional instruction

# Examples of Gamification: Rewards and Achievements

## What is It?

- Anything that can be earned by doing a task
- Can be tied to a single event or earned over time

## Pros

- Simple way to add gamification to pre-existing assignments or activities
- Desirable rewards incentivize students to participate
- “Leveling up” may serve as an intrinsic reward

## Cons

- Prizes cost money
- Someone needs to keep track of prizes or scoring system
- Can be difficult to find the right incentive

# Examples of Gamification: Immersive Activities

## What is It?

- Game-based learning - game play with defined learning outcomes
- Clear goals or ways to win
- Usually in-person
- Often also include rewards and prizes

## Pros

- Engages students in a different way than typical assignments
- Can appeal to interests and strengths beyond academics

## Cons

- Requires considerable staff time and commitment
- In-person events may not work for students who commute, are fully remote, or have scheduling conflicts

# Creative Gamification

“Creative gamification” emphasizes the process of thinking transformatively about assignments, lessons, or events. It describes gamification that is built into the foundation rather than added on top later.

Consider:

How can we change the task itself to be gamified, while still retaining the information that needs to be learned?

How do we create - and promote - a task that students *want* to do, rather than something they *have* to do?



# Miss Information and the Great Library Quest



# Initial Push: Changes to New Student Orientation

In 2023, we began to reconsider our traditional in-person library orientation:

- Need for flexibility
- Limitations on how, when, and where in-person activities take place
- Director requested we also maintain an online orientation to accommodate our large population of commuter students and rising numbers of remote learners
- Critically, changes to the university's New Student Orientation program meant students weren't required to come to the library

# The Idea: Miss Information and the Great Library Quest

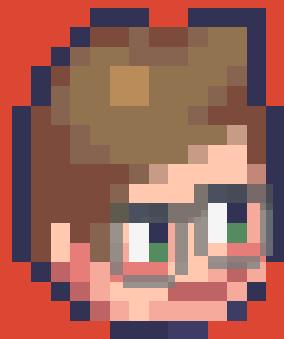


You play as an alien who has come to Earth to tour the planet's greatest libraries, but unfortunately for you, your tour guide is Miss Information herself. As you play, you'll uncover Miss Information's dastardly plot while you learn about the library's many services, resources, and support for students. (Yes, even those who came from space!)

- ✓ Flexible - Can be played anytime, anywhere
- ✓ Runs on its own, no staff resources beyond maintenance
- ✓ Virtual recreation so students can get to “know” the library
- ✓ A fun (hopefully) way to draw students into the library!



# Making Our Game



## The Concept

- What takeaway did we want for players?
- Quests for each of the main focal areas
- A storyline to connect them all
- Other desired features

## The Script

- Collaboration! Each quest had a “head writer” so we could work on multiple storylines simultaneously.
- Transitions between stories
- Choosing the tone: light, funny, informative.



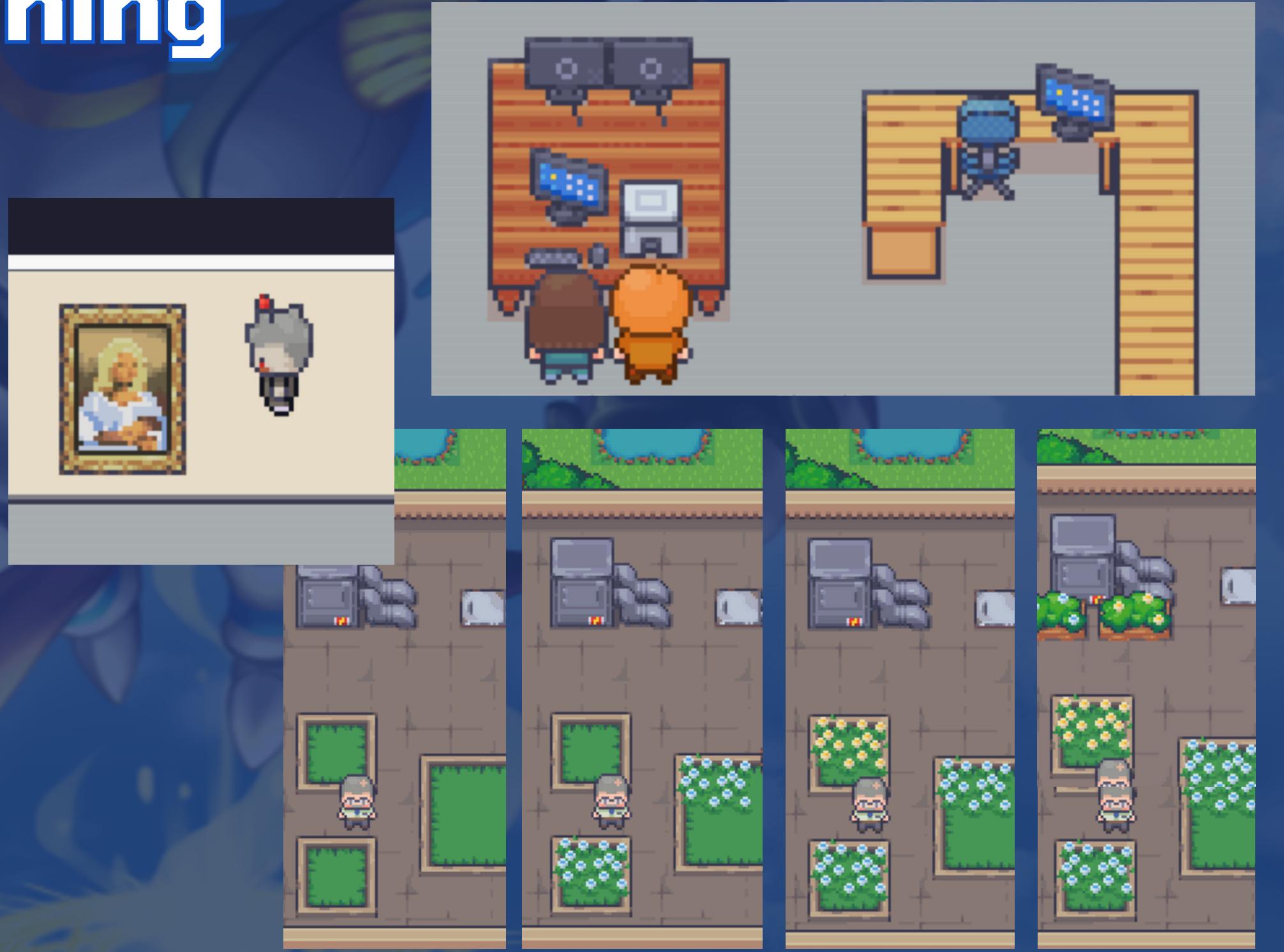
# Building the Game

- Re-creating our library virtually
- Translating the script into in-game events



# Testing & Refining

- Testing for:
  - Errors and glitches
  - Playability and difficulty level
- Fixing glitches, adjusting difficulty, adding finishing touches & extras (music, Easter eggs, more interactions)



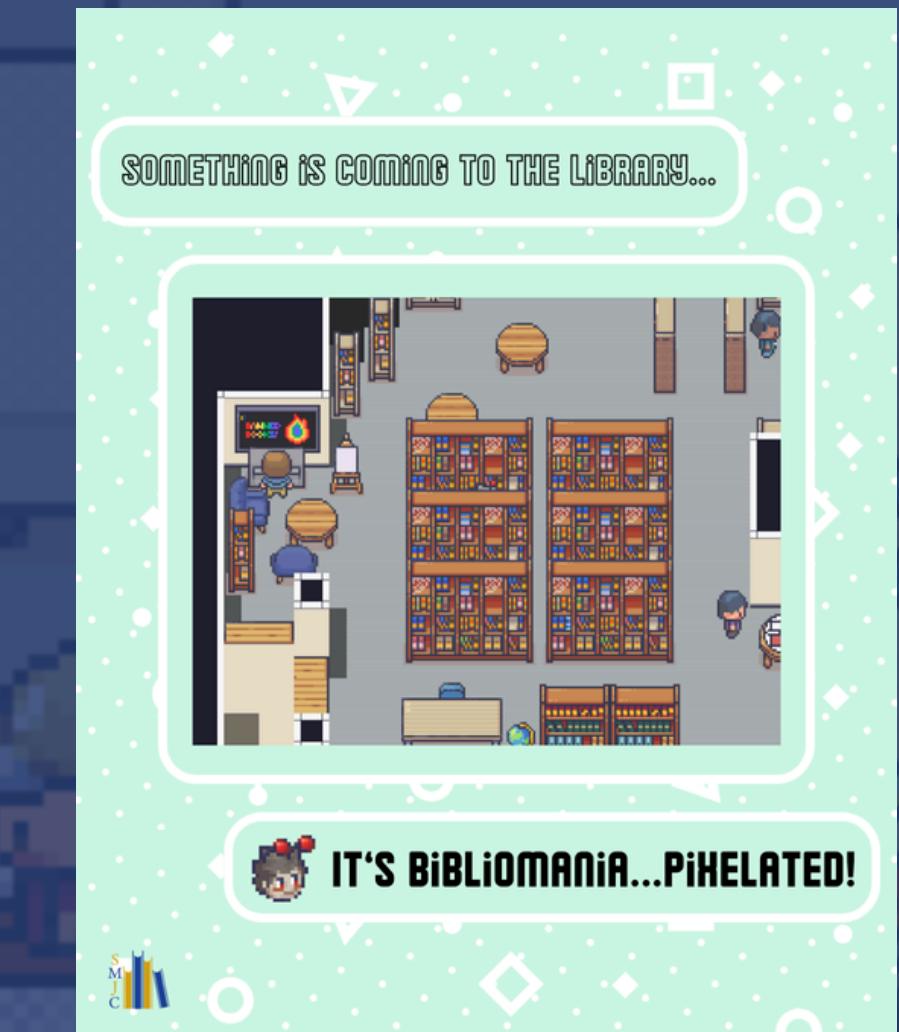


**Promotion  
&  
Rollout**



# Planning and Promotion

-National Library Week Teaser Announcement & Newsletter



# Planning and Promotion



-”What is  
Gamification”  
Event & Game  
Testing

-590 views on  
Instagram



**SOMETHING  
IS COMING  
TO  
THE  
LIBRARY...**

# New Student Orientation

Fall 2025: Start of the Semester

- Lionpalooza is a two hour block of new student orientation where campus departments are able to set up tables to showcase what they offer.
- We used snack sized chip bags to give out to students which had QR codes to our pre and post-surveys along with a QR code to the game.
- We prepared for 150+ students, but less than 50 visited our table.

# Around the Library

Fall 2025: First month of the semester.

- Inside the library, we used our main display which is located right at the front of the building when you walk in to display fun graphics from the game and also put the snack bags there for students to take.
- We set up a computer that had the game available on the desktop for students to play at their leisure.
- We displayed the game title screen along with a QR code on our scrolling TV reel to further promote it.

# General Education Program

Fall 2025: Late October

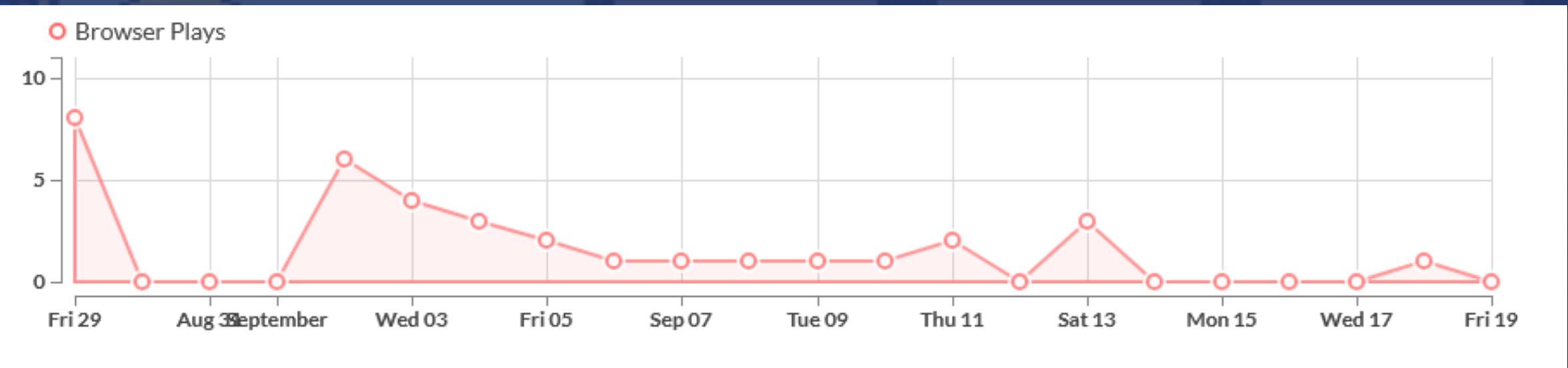
-O&UE Librarian, Christine, was invited to present to all of the General Education students in GEN101. This was a total of four back to back sessions.

-Playing the game was the required assignment for each student.

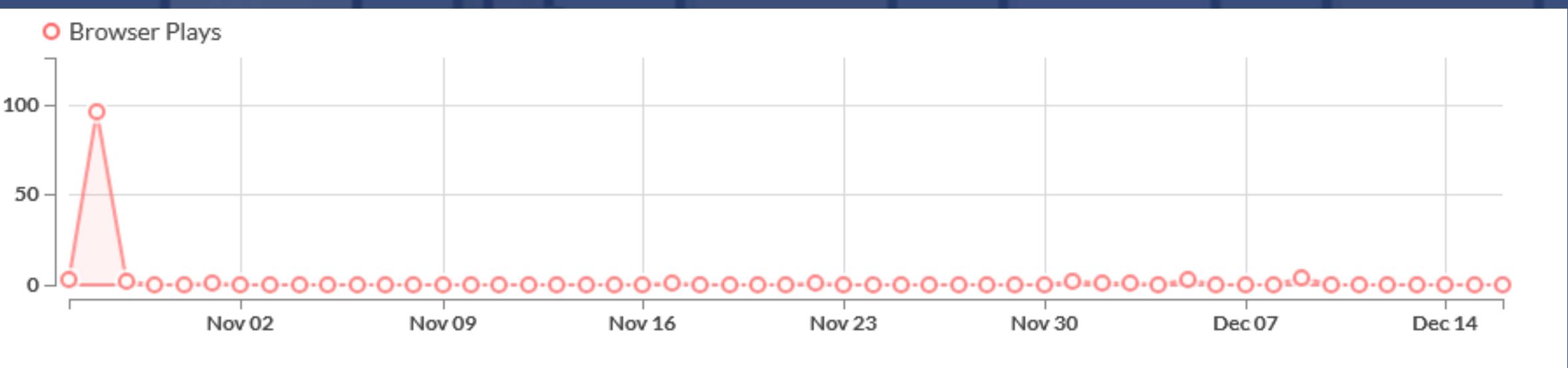
-By doing this, live reactions of the game experience were observed.

# Total Playthroughs

-220 Browser plays to date



-New Student Orientation and first two weeks of the semester (30 Plays)



-Gen101 Collaboration (96 Plays)

# Survey Reflections

Total Survey Responses: 109 Pre-Survey & 106 Post-Survey

How often do you play video games?				
	<i>Often</i>	21	19.27%	
	<i>Sometimes</i>	38	34.86%	
	<i>Rarely</i>	51	46.79%	
Have you visited the library?				
	<i>Yes</i>	85	77.98%	
	<i>No</i>	23	21.10%	
	<i>Unanswered</i>	1	0.92%	

# Survey Breakdown

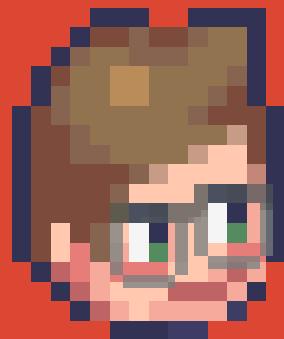
	Pre-Game % of Total	Post-Game % of Total
How many floors are in the library?	88.07%	95.28%
Where should you go if you have a research topic but aren't sure how to find books or articles about it?	62.39%	86.79%
What is a scholarly source?	76.15%	89.62%
Who can help me find a scholarly source?	69.72%	78.30%

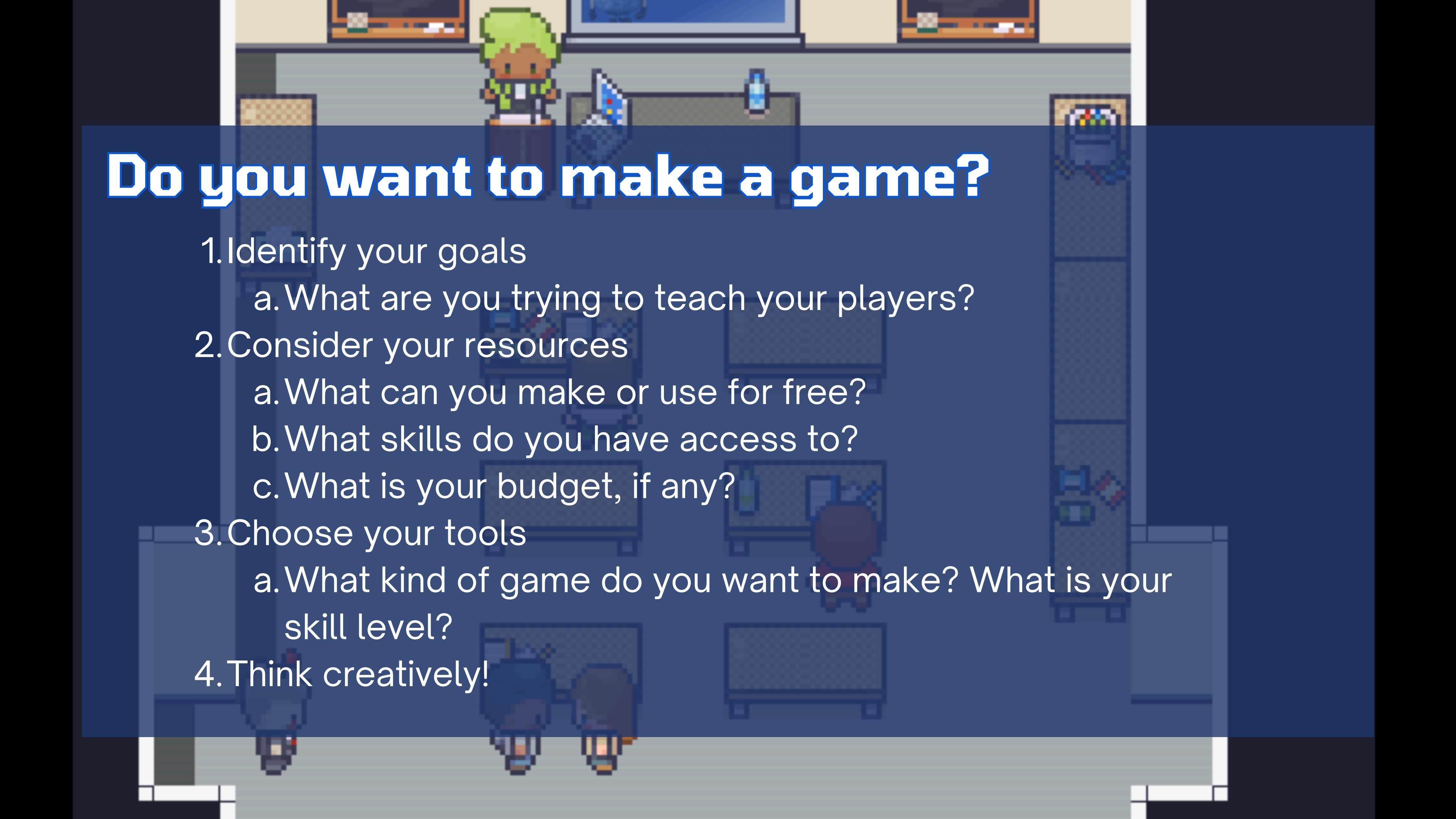
## Survey Reflections

**After playing the game, 67% of respondents said they would be more likely to visit the library.**



**Making Your Own  
Game!**





# Do you want to make a game?

1. Identify your goals
  - a. What are you trying to teach your players?
2. Consider your resources
  - a. What can you make or use for free?
  - b. What skills do you have access to?
  - c. What is your budget, if any?
3. Choose your tools
  - a. What kind of game do you want to make? What is your skill level?
4. Think creatively!

# What kind of game?

## Examples

**Text-based adventure or visual novel?**

Choose-your-own adventure books

## Try These Free Tools

Twine or Ren'Py

## Coding Skill

None required (Twine); Minor familiarity (Ren'Py uses Python)

## Resource Recommendations

Background music, scene-setting images or illustrations, backgrounds and character portraits

**2D Role-Playing Game (RPG)?**

Our game, Pokémon, classic Final Fantasy titles

GameMaker.io, RPGMaker (paid, but often on sale)

Minor familiarity with general coding concepts like variables and if/then conditions is helpful

Pixel art for backgrounds and characters, background music

**Platformer or action game?**

Super Mario Bros, Sonic the Hedgehog

Stencyl

Minor familiarity with coding concepts is helpful

Pixel art for backgrounds and characters, background music

# Resources for game makers

## itch.io

- A hub for independently-made games and their creators
- Use this website for:
  - Examples of games made with various engines
  - Free or low-cost assets
  - Hosting your final creation

## Music, Art, and Other Assets

Search for assets that are: royalty-free, public domain, Creative Commons licensed, owned by your institution, etc.

## Game Engine Communities

Read up on whatever tool you select! You'll often find:

- Introductions to the program, such as video tutorials
- Troubleshooting discussions
- Ideas and tips
- Free resources specific to your game engine

# Talk to Us About Gamification!

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