

Some Ideas for using Kinect Games in the Classroom

1. **Use as a reward:** after completion of certain tasks, or for good behaviour, etc.
2. **Learn direction words:** make labels to stick on the wall where the image is projected, eg up, down, left, right.
3. **Create a communication gap:** have one learner explain to another how to do an activity; for more excitement, blindfold the Kinect user, and allow another non-player to look at the screen and give instructions in real time; could be good for learning verbs, and giving instructions, eg “jump”, “run”, “throw”, etc as well as directions;
4. **Expand on a game:** tell a story, orally initially, then written, about a game, to describe what happened; in keeping with the above principles, this could be done using a frame or specific structures relevant to the game; or stop half way and predict what will happen.
5. **Allow learners to create avatars:** this could be an opportunity to learn words for body parts (eg eyes, mouth, etc), and to justify choices made using describing words (colours, other adjectives); this could be prepared for and followed up with “who am I” activities, eg describing oneself to the class with your avatar on the screen. The teacher could create a series of “Guess who I am” avatars of famous people, and discuss how we know it is that person (eg Mandela).
6. Games, especially ones of a more narrative nature, can be used to **initiate role play:** after suitable preparation of vocabulary, grammar structures and/or frames, learners can play out interactions they experienced, or watched others experiencing, on-screen;
7. **The language of Numeracy:** particularly relevant to sports activities, learners can be helped to understand results tables, score sheets, performance graphs etc; also distance and measurement can be explored, together with concepts of near/far, short/long, low/high etc.; aspects of games invite counting and keeping tally, eg in field events, players each have 3 turns, and in 10 pin bowling, learners can count the pins, and would have to understand bonds of 10 to see how many still need to be knocked down;
8. **The concept of overview:** most games start with an introductory menu offering choices, and in narrative-based ones this is often linked to progress through the story; this can be used to teach the important cognitive concept of overview, an important sub-skill for learning prediction and for promoting confidence in dealing with new ideas;
9. **Understanding maps:** a specific kind of overview is a map, giving a geographical view of a narrative; teachers could use the map in the story to introduce the concept of mapping, and learners could draw maps of their school, their neighborhood, etc.
10. **Learn self-management:** learners could be encouraged to keep a diary of activities undertaken on the Xbox, and record which game they played and what their achievements have been; this could also assist the teacher in choosing activities for particular learners to be involved in, and in facilitating equal access to the Xbox;
11. **Emotional intelligence:** some games could lend themselves to promoting understanding of emotion by providing a safe, clear picture which can be discussed, eg what is the character feeling now?
12. **Environmental awareness:** games take place in a context, some of which are like the natural world; care for the environment could be a topic to be discussed as a spin-off of such games.