



## Gamification Using Virtual Reality

00:07–00:30

**Andrew Coletti:** Hello and welcome back to this episode of the T in Teaching. In this episode, we will explore what it takes and means to gamify a lesson in the classroom. In this episode, I interviewed Mike Shurmur to see what he did in his classroom and the results that he saw from Gamifying the lesson. Thank you for watching and please enjoy.

00:30–00:32

**Andrew Coletti:** Mike, thank you so much for joining me for this episode.

00:32–00:38

**Mike Schirmer:** It's a pleasure. This is actually the second time I've been in the studio, and it's always a great experience.

00:38–00:39

**Andrew Coletti:** You can tell we like you.

00:39–00:41

**Mike Schirmer:** Well, it's my pleasure to be here.

00:41–00:58

**Andrew Coletti:** Well, I'm excited to talk about this lesson that you've gamified using virtual reality. But as we've talked about, you didn't start by gamifying this lesson in virtual reality at all. But before we get started, I want to kind of talk about gamification as a term and a concept because it gets thrown around quite a bit in education.

00:58–01:13

**Andrew Coletti:** So I'm going to give you a definition and I want to see what you think of it. Gamification can be defined as an approach to motivating students by recreating or replicating game-like elements into a lesson or unit, to encourage students' engagement and achievement. How does it sound to you?

01:13–01:32

**Mike Schirmer:** I'd say that sounds, spot on. Yeah. Just a way to, you know, get beyond the one-way monologue, one-way dissemination of information to pull them into the learning process and make them a part of it.

01:32–01:52

**Andrew Coletti:** Sure, sure. Yeah, I think you can get some really good engagement. One thing I want to point out about that definition that stands out to me is its game-like elements, not video game-like elements. And why do I say that? It's because video games are really fun. They're everywhere today, and I think people think that every gamified lesson in education needs to involve sleek technology.

01:52–02:10

**Andrew Coletti:** And I know you used VR, but you didn't always use VR. So we're going to talk a little bit about how you did that before you use technology. Sure. But let's talk about the class that you designed this

year. 3103. You've been teaching it for years. What is this course and what do you want the students to walk out of the course with when the semester is over?

02:10–02:11

**Andrew Coletti:** What's the takeaway?

02:11–02:58

**Mike Schirmer:** Sure. So, bar 3103, is called integrative Business Applications, and it was developed years ago. as a prerequisite for the Bachelor of Business Administration BBA capstone course, which is, is heavily based. The capstone course is heavily based on the case method of teaching and learning. And so BA 31 and three were designed to be deployed in the core, to help prepare students for success there, to, think about the specific learning outcomes is, how to frame business problems, how to think, contextually, and how to use the scientific method of problem-solving.

02:58–03:29

**Mike Schirmer:** In other words, gathering data, both quantitative and qualitative data turns that into information that you can use to make decisions, especially long-term decisions. And so the ultimate goal there with the class was to be able to build on what they've learned in the core courses before that. You know, these are juniors and seniors and then to prepare them for success in the capstone as well as beyond, you know, preparing them for life in the business world.

03:29–03:49

**Andrew Coletti:** Yeah, yeah, I know we've talked about this course and your commitment to trying to prepare students for the workforce, to the real world. And one thing you've always stressed to me is professional and mature communication among your students. You don't want them to just be talking to one another. You want them to be hearing and thinking and talking to each other about what they're saying, understanding what they're talking about.

03:49–04:04

**Andrew Coletti:** So you've been running this lesson at the end of every semester, as a way to tie things together, to nail that point about communication home. But like I said, you didn't always do it in virtual reality. So tell me about what it looks like before we put on the headsets.

04:04–04:26

**Mike Schirmer:** Yeah. That's right. You know, prior to, working with you all and, and integrating the virtual reality headsets into, into the course, as a way to kind of, put a nice end to it, put a bow around it, you know, get a nice experience for, for the students, expose them to this new technology, learning technology.

04:26–05:04

**Mike Schirmer:** But prior to that, it was I used what I would call the analog version, okay. Basically, putting the students into situations where they would be expected to accomplish tasks and achieve goals, but, in ways that, they might experience in the actual workplace where there are communication barriers, where there's a strong, organizational culture that has, expectations and norms of how we conduct business.

05:04–05:28

**Mike Schirmer:** And, you know, a lot of times, you know, you find yourselves in a situation in real life where you might not be a good fit with that. And, you know, that can cause some, some dissonance and, and cause us not to achieve our goals and maybe even cause some folks to, make a self-selection to go some, someplace where it's a better fit.

05:28–05:51

**Mike Schirmer:** So I would use that, that what I call the analog version, and, and puts them through that. And we had a lot of fun with it. You know, the students had fun. They, you know, a lot of them struggled to struggle

to not just meet their goals and for, for various reasons, you know, perhaps, you know, they don't have the artistic skill set because of the artistic element in it.

**05:51–06:14**

**Mike Schirmer:** But also just to communicate expectations because we were supposed to be doing this silently. Right? So there was you, you didn't, you couldn't benefit from the verbal communication. Everything was supposed to be nonverbal. Then with this opportunity to bring VR in, it's not so much replace but, augment and enhance the experience.

**06:15–06:24**

**Mike Schirmer:** Similar in nature in terms of their expectations and norms they have to solve. This, this specific problem, this task.

**06:24–06:44**

**Andrew Coletti:** Well, so let's talk about that. So in the analog version, the general premise is that you force the students to communicate without all the tools in the toolbox that they may normally have. And it makes them consider the difficulty of communication and working as a team. As you said, sometimes they're nonverbal. They can't communicate verbally, placing, you know, undue restraint, and they have to work.

**06:44–06:52**

**Mike Schirmer:** Around so and so. We learn from the first round and we apply the learning to the second. Things get a little bit better, but never quite where they need to be.

**06:52–07:03**

**Andrew Coletti:** Yeah, exactly. So you kind of take away one of their tools and see how they can still do it. And you're doing that in the VR headset. But for those who don't know what exactly is this VR game that you have them play.

**07:03–07:10**

**Mike Schirmer:** It's called I believe it's, keep calm and or, nobody nobody explodes.

**07:10–07:12**

**Andrew Coletti:** It's keep talking, keep talking. But that's where.

**07:12–07:13**

**Mike Schirmer:** I keep talking.

**07:13–07:14**

**Andrew Coletti:** Because the point is nobody.

**07:14–07:17**

**Mike Schirmer:** That's right. Yeah. I'm thinking keep calm and carry on.

**07:17–07:18**

**Andrew Coletti:** But yeah, you're right.

**07:18–07:44**

**Mike Schirmer:** Yeah, yeah. Keep talking and nobody explodes. And, so in the analog version, there is no talking in. And so you have nonverbal communication in the virtual wait, virtual reality, option there. There is talking, but there is no, non-visual communication. So everything has to be done, verbally and the task is to defuse a bomb.

**07:44–07:52**

**Mike Schirmer:** Yeah. And save the save. You know, at least the at least the team, if not, probably a lot of other folks in the area.

07:52–07:58

**Andrew Coletti:** So there's one person who wears the headset. I do see the bomb, but, yeah, the other people.

07:58–08:17

**Mike Schirmer:** What do they have access to? Instructions. Okay. And so they have to, read and interpret these instructions and then, you know, somehow, you know, translate those and communicate them effectively to the person with the headset on who is struggling. You know, first of all, you know, it's silly for a lot of folks. It's a new technology.

08:17–08:44

**Mike Schirmer:** So there's, you know, there's that experience too. But then just to be able to, interpret what somebody is saying, verbally into some kind of visual result and, to do that successfully. So a lot of fun. Certainly. And it's a lot of fun to watch. Yeah. I think it's fun to watch both types of, of I would like to if we ever run the analog version again, I'd love to have you come back and have your team come back and watch because it is kind of funny as well.

08:44–08:59

**Mike Schirmer:** But, the students do have, fun, especially with the virtual reality headsets. And then, of course, we debrief after these things too, and we discuss, you know, some of the challenges and, what went well and didn't go so well, what could be done differently now?

08:59–09:13

**Andrew Coletti:** I sat in for one of those debriefs and one thing jumped out to me, I don't sit in on every class that you do, so I can't speak for every other one. But the students were motivated to talk at the end of it. As you mentioned, when they're doing the game, they're very excited. They're fun.

09:13–09:30

**Andrew Coletti:** It's laughable. Everyone's having a good time. But then when it carries over to the serious academic part and you debrief and you talk about it, there's still pretty jovial, still pretty happy and energetic. I don't want to say anything bad about your students, but I'm guessing that's not every single class that they're all so motivated to talk, am I right?

09:30–10:13

**Mike Schirmer:** Well, I, I'd like to think that's the way I manage the actual classroom in that, you know, I, never like this concept of a professor being, you know, the sage on the stage. Right? And, I just think that the students are going to get so much more if we create, fewer monologues and more dialogs, and so that there's an exchange of ideas, and by the time we get to the end of the semester, when these things happen, they're just accustomed to be to, you know, share their thoughts, share what's out of mind, share their experiences.

10:14–10:31

**Mike Schirmer:** They're not shy, or I would say they're less shy, at least with me. And so I'm glad you were able to observe that. And, you know, some are more chatty than others. Certain, and sometimes it's actually, difficult to get some of them to, you know, put a bow on it.

10:31–10:32

**Andrew Coletti:** Yeah. I'm sure.

10:32–10:33

**Mike Schirmer:** I'm sure.

10:33–10:47

**Andrew Coletti:** Well, that sounds like a really interesting, idea for your class, but it sounds like it's not the only way that you're breaking up your lessons and your instructions. And like you said, more dialog, less monologue. And I like that quote. It seems like you live by that in your classroom, and it seems like your students enjoy it.

10:47–10:51

**Andrew Coletti:** So I wish I was a student in VA 33, but yes.

10:51–11:09

**Mike Schirmer:** Okay. Well, I will say that that, I would think that, you know, I'm, I'm an acquired taste. I'm probably not what they've been used to. And so I've even had some, some students say that. Well, you know, in the beginning, I wasn't quite sure I liked this. And then by the end of the semester, I was.

11:09–11:10

**Mike Schirmer:** Yep.

11:10–11:15

**Andrew Coletti:** Yep. Thank you again for coming on and talking about this lesson that you do and how you've innovated it over the years.

11:15–11:20

**Mike Schirmer:** So my pleasure, but thanks for having me. And, look forward to the next time. Yeah. Keep me in mind.