Flappy Bird

Silly Games Breaks the Ice

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Modality

[x]  Synchronous

[ ]  Asynchronous

Number of students:

*Works well with any number of students*

Technique status

[x]  Used regularly

[ ]  Tested but not used regularly

[ ]  New idea

Technology Requirements

*Students need to access the free web game Flappy Bird at* [*https://flappybird.io/*](https://flappybird.io/)

*Ideally, students will have web cameras and microphones*

Technique summary description

*Students challenge themselves and their classmates to earn the highest score in a simple, but quite challenging online arcade-style game.*

Technique Description and Instructions

*Flappy Bird is popular phone game that you can play on your computer browser. Unlike many games, Flappy Bird was designed to be incredibly difficult. Scores of 4 or 5 are quite common.*

*We use this game early in an online term to introduce play into the course and give students a taste of how much fun failure and challenge can be. The rules are simple:*

1. *While in the synchronous classroom (we use Zoom), go to the Flappy Bird game site:* [*https://flappybird.io/*](https://flappybird.io/)
2. *Play the game.*
3. *If you want to be eligible for prizes ( we mail stickers at the end of the term), you have to keep your web cam and audio on. This allows everyone in the class to hear and see your triumphs and tribulations.*

*After a few minutes of play, we canvas the class to see what kind of scores people get.*

*We use this as a connection former activity to get students quickly playing together, feeling safe about being on camera and bonding a group as they try to beat this impossible game! We use other simple, but challenging games such as QWOP (*[*https://www.foddy.net/Athletics.html*](https://www.foddy.net/Athletics.html)*) and Draw a Perfect Circle (*[*https://neal.fun/perfect-circle/*](https://neal.fun/perfect-circle/)*) in a similar fashion.*

Additional Comments

*Sometimes, just getting students to play is the heart of playful pedagogy. We find that easy-to-learn and hard-to-master games give students a safe place to interact with the class and each other before we challenge them to play and learn together in more serious contexts. For the price of five minutes of play at the beginning of each online class, we earn trust, attention and connection that translates into real learning.*