LEARNING SCENARIO: Scavenger hunts for gamified spatial learning

Educational level: Secondary | **Age:** 10-18
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Design FILS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES/ ASPIRATIONS

Scavenger hunts for gamified spatial learning makes learning dynamic. Students explore and use the environment and are immersed in a holistic learning experience that includes a wide range of activities. Making use of mobile learning, the activity focuses on responsibility, ownership, creativity and group work.

NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

Learning should be a discovery for students. Reading-based activities can certainly have the effect of a mental discovery. Students could also physically go on a learning journey and find or walk to destinations, either in the class or school building, or even better, outside the school. Together with mobile technologies, the experience of being an explorer could even be made stronger this way.

Scavenger hunts are games, typically played in an outdoor area, where participants have to find a number of hidden objects. Geocaching is a similar activity, in which participants use a mobile device and other navigational techniques to hide and seek containers, called geocaches or caches, at specific locations marked by coordinates. Both traditional scavenger hunts and geocaching are used in the context of education, but if the only objective is to find objects, the activity is in a way limited.

Nowadays teachers can make use of several applications to combine spatial learning with game elements and tools like GPS locations, directions, maps, QR codes, pictures, videos, quizzes, missions, tournaments, etc. The application on the device of the students leads the learners to tasks located in different spaces. The typical gamification elements and techniques are added to the experience, like scores, challenges and immediate feedback. Scavenger hunts for gamified spatial learning combine many pedagogical approaches into one activity. In most cases spatial scavenger hunts are small group activities. The teams move to different stops or stations and are challenged in diverse ways.

APPROACH TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

After the completion of a project, or during the drafting phase, seek the insight of an expert to build on what students have learned and make a meaningful connection to the community. Practice writing emails, reaching out to the experts, organize a meeting, and prepare valuable questions for the expert.

ASSESSMENT

For the specific learning objectives, preparing the questions for the expert is an excellent opportunity for the teacher to evaluate what learning goals are concrete and which ones are not. With groups creating a list of questions they need to know the answers to and choosing the most important ones - the class reviews important information.

ROLES

TEACHERS: Preparing a scavenger hunt activity which includes free movements of students, is complex and can be time consuming. The role of the teacher is to consider all aspects of the activity and have plan B ready. Teachers must give clear instructions to students before the start and organize feedback and assessment after the activity. If scavenger hunts take place outdoors, the safety of the students is a priority.

LEARNERS: The learners get some freedom of movement to overcome the challenges of the scavenger hunt. By creating the task, the teacher decides on the actual activities. In most cases the learners work in small teams.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- The idea of the scavenger hunt definitely supports the idea of the dynamic classroom. The learners move around the classroom, school building or outdoors and the space can play the role of the third teacher.
- The pedagogical concepts behind the learning zones can be connected to the scavenger hunt. The tasks can include multiple **investigation** and **creation** activities. At the end, the different participants can, either individual or in group, **present** in plenary what they created or learned from the scavenger hunt activity.
- Before and after the scavenger hunt, the teacher **interacts** with the students to brief and debrief. During the scavenger hunts the students work in groups and **exchange**. In fact, scavenger hunts take place without the direct supervision of the teacher, so the learners **develop** their learning independently.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Scavenger hunts can be used as an alternative for more traditional station rotation activities. The scavenger hunt could be set up so that students can go to a free space, either in groups or individually, and perform the task.
- Scavenger hunts can be used to give students controlled independence to explore the area when going on a school trip.
- QR codes are often used as access points to the necessary information on each of the stages of the scavenger hunt. Also, students can create tours or scavenger hunts for peers by means of QR codes.
- If spatial movements are not feasible, scavenger hunts can take place virtually. Students need to find clues to hop from one place on the internet to another one and eventually arrive at the final destination.

POSSIBLE CHALLENGES

Giving students the freedom to walk around, especially in areas where the teacher cannot supervise all the students, requires confidence. Moving from a traditional teacher-centred context where teachers have full control on their students requires a different mindset.

It is important to shift gradually from traditional teaching with fixed classroom lay-outs to spatial learning. Classroom management will be different. Also, safety of students is an issue to bear in mind.

LITERATURE TO SUPPORT

Hall, S. (2019, 8 13). Engaging Students with Scavenger Hunts. Retrieved from Teachers First:

https://teachersfirst.com/blog/2019/08/engaging-students-with-scavenger-hunts/

Marie. (2020, 3 31). Creating a Scavenger Hunt for Your Classroom. Retrieved from Perfecting the World of Middle School Literature: https://completeliterature.com/creating-a-scavenger-hunt-for-your-classroom/

RESOURCES

- Action Bound - https://actionbound.com/
- Locatify - https://locatify.com/

LEARNING SCENARIO VIDEO

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxsSrx0NpZM