

# Chapter 14

## Esports and Education: The Perfect Mix

**James Fraser-Murison**  
*Queen Mary's College, UK*

### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter is about the importance of establishing a brand new esports BTEC and its relevance in education moving forward. The author will share the successes and failures of a new esports BTEC course, whilst also considering how it lends itself to other subjects at both school and sixth-form level and also routes into university and new careers. Having helped write parts of the first-ever BTEC for esports, the author will share the progress made with its inception and subsequent journey from its launch during a pandemic and touching upon its future as a career for students in an ever-changing world.*

### **THE BEGINNING OF ESPORTS AT QMC**

In April 2019, myself, a teaching colleague, and the head of Queen Mary College Basingstoke (QMC) visited Chichester University to discuss how they planned on launching their esports degree. Chichester University and Staffordshire University (London campus) were two of the first universities in the UK to see the obvious synergy with esports and education, but also the pathway to future, digitally proofed jobs. Creating and leading a qualification that is both vibrant, contemporary, and more importantly, future proofed. To see first-hand what was available to students leaving sixth form and going into university was a real eye-opener for us and gave us real food for thought about how we could launch a similar course for post-16 students at QMC. We returned energised at what we had seen and somewhat pleased that esports was part of the future for education. Buoyed by the excitement and potential of what we could achieve at QMC that supports an industry worth north of \$1.1 billion dollars (Newzoo, (n.d)), we needed to frame it for relevance within a college and to engage our students, many of whom game competitively already. We also needed a way to get them to communicate with each other and not within their own individual silos.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-7069-2.ch014

This chapter is an autoethnographic study about the eighteen months it took to plan, develop, and create the QMC esports gaming and learning space for students aged 16-18. Autoethnography is a form of research that involves self-observation and reflexive investigation in the context of ethnographic field work and writing (Maréchal, 2010). Carolyn Ellis (2004) defines it as research that tells a story through writing, interviews and methods that connect the researcher to the culture of the topic being studied. Using personal reflection and interviews, I touch upon what I learned, what I wish I knew before I started, and where the field may be going from here.

### **THE INTEGRATION OF ESPORTS IN EDUCATION**

Video games and scholastic esports have slowly muscled their way into schools and classrooms in the UK; however, the idea has been around for over a decade (New London Group, 1996). It seems the field of education lowered its guard about the use of video games as learning tools and their potential (Marlatt, 2020; Harvey, 2016). Recent research in the field has provided the empirical clout needed to defend and implement video games and esports into the educational environment across grade levels (Granic, et al., 2014). In recent years, the integration of video games and esports as a supplemental resource has educators the chance to explore and research its use, and now, esports is now a learning vehicle for schools all around the world (Gee, 2007).

At QMC, students participate in sessions within the students' timetable called 'enrichment' classes, the sole purpose of which is to 'enrich' the lives of students without any qualification or exams attached to them. They are fun lessons if you like and allow students to trial and enjoy totally different aspects of college that they do not have access to in the subject classes. As an example of what we did, let us take the example from our Film Club. Always one of our most popular enrichment programmes; it is a chance for students to watch and analyse classic films they would not normally watch in their spare time and frame it around a greater context of say, the social-political period in which the film was made. Examples such as *Chinatown* or *Dr Strangelove*. As you can imagine, it is a popular class - not just because of the amazing staff who lead it - but also because it is fun! Believe it or not, there is nothing wrong with fun in education either, but I will get onto that part later in the chapter. Bearing in mind our college has roughly 2,000 students, to get them all free at the same time for Film Club or any enrichment class can be tricky. At the start of the year, 30 or so students show an interest, with perhaps half that number being able to fit it on their timetable. When news broke recently that one of the most successful English football clubs in the last decade partnered with Faze Clan to host a Fortnite tournament (Nicholson, 2021), students wanted to know about this culturally significant event within the business and educational framework. So, the approach to introducing esports at QMC was to launch an esports enrichment programme and to expand the initial group the following year if it proved successful. The initial launch saw an uptake of 65 students, all willing to stay behind college for an hour to partake in the esports enrichment programme.

Here is what Joe, one of our team captains had to say recently about our esports enrichment launch:

*“Competing in the esports enrichment has really helped me to connect with a great wider community through the British Esports Championships, whether it be through talking to rival teams / players on social media or working with other QMC students to try to become the best. It has given me many opportunities to network with potential future contacts that may be useful to me in the future if I decide to pursue a career in the esports industry. I have been able to captain the QM Samurai Overwatch team,*

15 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/esports-and-education/285094](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/esports-and-education/285094)

## Related Content

---

### The Effectiveness of Gamification on Student Engagement, Learning Outcomes, and Learning Experiences

Kenneth C. C. Yang and Yawei Kang (2022). *Research Anthology on Developments in Gamification and Game-Based Learning* (pp. 1599-1618).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-effectiveness-of-gamification-on-student-engagement-learning-outcomes-and-learning-experiences/293721](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-effectiveness-of-gamification-on-student-engagement-learning-outcomes-and-learning-experiences/293721)

### Discrete Primary Education Curriculum in Bangladesh: Implications of Gamification for Quality Education

Md Jahangir Alam, Sheikh Rashid Bin Islam and Keiichi Ogawa (2022). *Handbook of Research on Acquiring 21st Century Literacy Skills Through Game-Based Learning* (pp. 716-730).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/discrete-primary-education-curriculum-in-bangladesh/294956](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/discrete-primary-education-curriculum-in-bangladesh/294956)

### Evaluation of a Training Program for Trainee Teachers in Active Methodologies for Teaching Social Sciences

Ramón Méndez, Álvaro Chaparro-Sainz, Rubén Martínez Sánchez and María del Mar Felices-De la Fuente (2022). *Cases on Historical Thinking and Gamification in Social Studies and Humanities Education* (pp. 259-280).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/evaluation-of-a-training-program-for-trainee-teachers-in-active-methodologies-for-teaching-social-sciences/311028](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/evaluation-of-a-training-program-for-trainee-teachers-in-active-methodologies-for-teaching-social-sciences/311028)

### Stealth Assessment in Game-Based and Task-Based Language Teaching: A Framework From Teachers' Perspective

Di Liu, Hyangeun Ji and Dominique Kliger (2023). *Games as Stealth Assessments* (pp. 289-313).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/stealth-assessment-in-game-based-and-task-based-language-teaching/333593](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/stealth-assessment-in-game-based-and-task-based-language-teaching/333593)

### A Protocol for Reviewing Off-the-Shelf Games to Inform the Development of New Educational Games

Ruth Torres Castillo and Sara Morales (2022). *Research Anthology on Developments in Gamification and Game-Based Learning* (pp. 235-252).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/a-protocol-for-reviewing-off-the-shelf-games-to-inform-the-development-of-new-educational-games/293653](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/a-protocol-for-reviewing-off-the-shelf-games-to-inform-the-development-of-new-educational-games/293653)