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Vicki Davis:

Today only, February 17, to celebrate **Random Acts of Kindness Day**, Jessica is having her own random act of kindness to 10-MT listeners by **giving away the Kindle version of her book free** on the US Amazon Kindle store!" It's a Teacher Thing! FAQ Guide and Reflective Journal for New Teachers" is currently available in eBook and paperback through Amazon Kindle. Visit <https://www.amazon.com/Teacher-Thing-Reflective-Journal-Teachers/dp/1520398247> -- and it is free today on Kindle in the US Amazon store! Enjoy and thank you, Jessica!

Jessica Gordon:

"Map skills, they were creating maps, they were doing critical thinking even some maps – distance between points on maps, but the whole time they're trying to survive the zombie apocalypse."

The Ten-minute Teacher podcast with Vicki Davis. Every week day you'll learn powerful practical ways to be a more remarkable teacher today.

VICKI: Happy Five Idea Friday. We're going to talk gamification again. But today, we're going to talk about some fast free things that you can do in your classroom to add game-based learning. We have Jessica Gordon, [@1337teach](#) 6th grade teacher from Missouri who is doing lots of things with gamification in her classroom. So Jessica, give us some thoughts or some ideas for how you're gamifying your classroom?

JESSICA: I feel that when many educators hear the term gamification, it can sound kind of intimidating but it really doesn't have to be. Gamification is just the incorporation of gameplay or elements of gameplay into the classroom. It can increase student interest, engagement and motivation to accomplish tasks.

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And there's some pretty simple things that teachers can do that don't want to jump into – you know, I've seen classrooms where it's full immersion where each kid is put in different groups and groups are in point and the teacher has to keep up with rankings of every group and every student. And a lot of times it's just really hard to keep up with all that can be used.

The first website I'll recommend is Wheel Decide <http://wheeldecide.com/>. It's a free website and you're able to make spinners. You can project them on your SMART Board or Promethean. You can use them for rewards, I have one <http://cctea.ch/10mt-gordon-spinner> that if my class gets more points than I do that day or that week, I choose someone to click the spinner and whatever rewards it lands on is what they get to do.

I've also used it to create review games <http://cctea.ch/10mt-gordon-review-game> . Kind of like Cranium <http://amzn.to/2kFjIzy> , I have a spinner and I think I've actually send you the link that will be made available where I have links to all of this. <https://www.smore.com/174cz> But I have a spinner for – we were studying landforms and it took me about two minutes and I made a spinner where they could either land on 'name it', 'picture it', 'mold it', 'draw it' or 'free choice'. And so they were able to either do like a Pictionary <http://amzn.to/2kwBs4Y> . They were given a landform, they had to draw it, their team had to guess it. Mold it, they were given Play Dough <http://amzn.to/2kFhBvz> and they had to make it and their team had to guess it.

And there was one where I projected a picture of the landform on the smartboard and they had to visually see it and guess it and then 'name it' was I just read the definition of the landform and then they had to say what it was. So that took me about two minutes to make that spinner. I mean, kids loved that game. So, there's a lot of things that you can do to kind of turn your lesson or review into something that's more fun that kids are going to get into.

VICKI:: That sounds like a blast. Now, we will put all of these links in the show notes. So what other ideas do you have that you use? You have a spinner and you can customize it for awards and games. What's next?

JESSICA: Other things that you can do – you mentioned the breakout classroom. There are actually a lot of things on breakout Facebook groups <https://www.facebook.com/groups/breakoutedu/> and blogs where teachers have kind of collaborated in order to share resources.

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Because a lot of teachers are making breakout lessons and things that you don't want to have to pay for, so you can actually go or you can find your Facebook group based on your subject area and your grade level and find a blog or a collaboration group on Facebook where people are sharing those things. <https://www.theescapeclassroom.com/free-workshop> I found it really great, free one that my kids did last week. And it all revolved around the zombie apocalypse. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5SZfjOmWYSPY21EbVRMRUp3UVU/view> So I've put my students into groups, I told them that they weren't just group, they were their families. So they actually got to pick a last name for their family. And I have them a back story. Then they had to complete various geography challenges.

So really all they were doing – they were doing latitude and longitude, map scales, they were creating maps, they were doing critical thinking, even some map scales, they were creating maps, they were doing critical thinking, even some maps – distance between points on maps. But the whole time they're trying to survive the zombie apocalypse. And if they made mistakes as a group and submitted work to me, they would lose time or they would lose days. And at the end of the week if you have a positive amount of days left, you survived.

There's a free website where you can make certificates. So I just made certificates showing that they had survive the zombie apocalypse and then they got to take little family photos holding up their certificates saying that they had completed this challenge and that they had made it out. A lot like the escape rooms that you see in a lot of areas where people go and do the escape room challenges. So I kind of wanted to bring that to my classroom and they really liked it.

VICKI: That sounds like so much fun. Okay, we have time for one more awesome idea. What's next?

JESSICA: Other things are people that maybe aren't ready to do a whole breakout classroom experience. Try small things, for instance Quizlets. <https://quizlet.com/28326296/landforms-flash-cards/> Love Quizlet. There's flashcards on there, you can create your own. It has timed games where kids can reinforce their understanding while also trying to beat their own scores or classmate scores, they can actually make their own account on Quizlet and then try to beat each other which my kids get pretty competitive with that.

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And then things like Kahoot <https://getkahoot.com/> and Quizziz <https://quizziz.com/> I know – today I can't really do justice talking about Kahoot and Quizzes right now but just check that out if you have time. Kids love Kahoot and Quizzes. It's basically turning review of a subject into a game show, like their own game show where they're trying to win. Almost like a trivia game, like the trivia apps that are pretty popular right now.

VICKI: And Jessica I know that when – I have my students make their own Kahoot, I teach all of our students. And the very last day of school two years ago, my students were saying, "Okay, can we play SAT Kahoot?" Because they just love it so much. So Jessica, let's finish up with this, what is a big mistake that some people make when they start gamifying their classroom?

JESSICA: I think a big mistake that I probably made – and I don't regret it because I've learned from it and I do things differently now. I attended a workshop at METC Technology Conference last year and I saw someone who was gamifying their classroom. I thought it was amazing and it really was but it was just too much. I feel like I kind of jumped in and bit off more than I could keep track of as far as I was giving kids points for everything or they could lose points for things. But when you have a hundred students it's very hard to keep up with those kind of things where you have to keep track of the Excel Spreadsheet or how many points they've earned or lost.

And so I just think doing little things rather than thinking that you have to have a whole game system for your classroom, I feel like is probably – just doing little things will probably be better than trying to jump in and do everything at once.

VICKI: Yeah, that's great advice until you're sure. I mean, I use Classcraft <https://game.classcraft.com/share/wDGcv6FpAWAyrrBhe> because it keeps track of it all for me. But you're right, you don't have to use a lot to really get a huge impact.

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So teachers, I really want you to think about gamifying your classroom, how could you add game-based elements, how can you get kids excited about the content by using games? Now, check out the show notes, you're going to have lots of links and lots of things that you can do with your classroom. And remember, teacher, to be remarkable sometimes it could be as simple as a game. Thanks for listening.

Thank you for listening to the Ten-minute Teacher podcast. You can download the show notes and see the archive and at www.coolcatteacher.com/podcast. Never stop learning.

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