

Desktop Offers Videogames with an Educational Twist!

One of the most popular applications on the Empowered Desktop with students at Hays USD 489 is the Arcademic Builders videogames. These games were developed through extensive research and align with state assessment standards. The games have the look of old arcade games, and there is the option to play either single or multi-player math games or single player word games. Alicia Brungardt, Instructional Technology Coordinator at Hays, described, "They are basically online educational games, including Capital Penguin, Meteor Multiplication, and Alien Addition. The kids really like them because they're highly interactive and look like a videogame. It's the concept of gaming, but with an educational context. The students think that they're playing games, but they're actually working on multiplication skills, math facts, or grammar concepts."

Brungardt described that it is also another option to use the Nintendo Wii when utilizing the Arcademic games. The Wii is a gaming system that uses a hand-held remote to interact with the game. The Wii can be hooked into the Internet, so its remote can be used to select correct answers with the online Arcademic videogames. Brungardt shared, "I have one teacher in particular who's using the Wii to teach other math concepts. It's just one more way, along with Arcademic Builders, to engage kids, because you can do flashcards for so long and then it becomes tedious. This teacher is already using the Wii to teach mean, median, and mode. Now we're going to add other math concepts."

Reducing boredom by getting students out of their chairs more often during the school day is a definite plus. Brungardt remarked, "This teacher was very excited to have yet another idea for those kids that need to be up and moving a little bit more often or for indoor recess on rainy days or cold days. She could actually set up the Wii, and they could play on Arcademic Builders. While they have fun playing the Wii, they're also working on the math concepts she's teaching in class. She is able to use it as reward or as reinforcement. It's yet another way to try to reach the students."

"I don't want to see the Desktop go away. I believe that this is a tool that really helps teachers teach in the classroom, and it provides a way for students to learn and demonstrate knowledge. It is an excellent tool for Kansas kids," Brungardt said.



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