[Introduction]
Welcome to the Teaching Remotely Together podcast – where our goal is to connect instructors who are willing to explore, share, and learn about one another's successes teaching in a remote learning environment. In hearing from different instructors on new topics each week, we hope their stories and ideas may inspire new ideas for your own classes.

Our topic for this week: **Gamification**.

[Tim Newby]
This video is about gamification and how it can be used within online instruction. So, what is gamification? There is this great article within Educause that answers those seven questions that are listed right there. And so, to get to there, I have put a link right here and you can go ahead and just click on that link and that will take you to the Educause site and there's a quick download and you've got that article, which is short and answers each of those seven questions about gamification.

For this video, I would just like to talk a little bit about why is it important and what are some of the things that I commonly use within my own classes to add gamified-type elements within my instructional materials. So, you ask this question, "Why in the world would I even worry about something like gamification?" And that's adding gaming elements within my instructional learning materials. So, why would I want to do that?

Well, number one, when you look at games and the amount of effort that individuals put into games it is something that I want to actually include within my instruction. So that when they're learning, they're doing that. So, if I want to get my students investing that kind of effort, are there some things they can learn from games and actually include to help to invest that type of effort? So that's the first thing is effort itself.

The other thing that I was thinking about is that there is this idea of enjoyment – that the appeal of the instruction is so great that the students not only do it, but they actually want to come back and do it again. And they want to reinvest their effort. And, so, I think those two elements help us to realize the motivational factors behind some of the gaming elements that we might be able to invest within our instruction and have a positive outcome from that. So, games do a really good job of this. Of having this effort and having individuals enjoy what they're experiencing. So, from that, if you start taking apart games, what are the things that they have within them?

There are a number of different things that the literature will point out, but the key things that I have found within my own work is that, one, there is this level of competition. Competition always drives certain amounts of effort that go into things and the competition is there. So, there are certain elements within gaming that can help us to invoke that type of competition so that people invest effort into something.

Another element that is there in many cases (not always, but in many cases) is the relevance factor. And that would be that you are adding in things because it makes something relevant to the student. Maybe there are certain types of problems they're working on. It is the idea of the escape room. We're all trying to get out of a room and it's got all different kinds of problems to solve and other things, and so consequently, we're investing a lot of effort to do it. And those are some of the different games that are really, really powerful in holding individuals' attentions and helping them to invest that effort there.

And then, finally, there is this idea of confidence. We may not know how to do everything at first, but if it's done in the right way so that it's a level and then you go from one level to the next level, to the next level, harder and harder as you are gaining greater competence and confidence, that helps. So, we take those three factors, that I've looked -- the competition elements, the relevant elements, and those of competence -- what can we do with online instruction to help build those within it?

Well, some of the things that you might think about, and what I've used in the past, are just the idea of adding scores to certain elements that you want them to do. Having recognition. These are all under this competition element. Having certain types of recognition. Maybe creating leader boards to show individuals how they compare with other individuals, which adds another level of competition. This won't work in all classes, but it does help in certain ones and you can certainly put those both within your face-to-face courses and also, especially, within your online courses. Individuals that are out there, they can see how well they are doing in comparison to others.

And then, of course, after a certain amount of certain milestones are reached, then you offer rewards or awards for achieving those type of achievement levels. And then, with relevant elements, you can start thinking about what type of problems can I involve? Can I insert real-world problems? Can I add simulations? We use a lot of cases because they are interesting, and they're problems and there's things that individuals can actually see themselves being within. And now all of a sudden, they're investing effort in something that they see that is very relevant. Even though it is coming, kind of, from a gaming angle and helping the student to see some real advantages for doing those kind of things. And that's helpful in certain ways.

And then finally, another area is the levels of challenge that we can add within that to help build their confidence. And we also add some mastery learning, so giving good feedback at a relative, certain time. Helping the students understand that they may not be perfect at this point, but by getting that feedback they can redo and resubmit and other things so that they get to a higher level. Again, things that you can use in your face-to-face classes, but you can also put within your online courses.

And then finally, as an example, there's a number of different things that we've done in our class, but I think this kind of illustrates some of the points that I've got. We use digital badges, in many cases, to teach certain concepts. To have them learn about various and different types of technologies. To master certain levels and things. And one of the key things that works so well about that is that, first of all, it is an award that they can get at the end if they've achieved it. It has certain challenge levels so they may not have it all mastered at first, but they can get from level to the next level, to the next.

We really try to add in these scenario-based or case-based type of instructions so that they can work through that. It makes it very, very relevant for them. There are times in which we put up a leader board to see how may have completed different stages of the different badges, so that they can compare themselves. And that adds another level of interest for individuals in some cases. And then, we always have this mastery learning of turning in certain levels knowing that they can get it back and retry it and work from there.

And then finally, the real questions. What are the real questions? Just to finish this up. Well, one of those is: How do I get my students to invest this effort? Is there a way of doing that? Well, I think there is and there is no greater reward, for me anyway, than knowing that my students are investing effort and they really want to continue with it. In fact, that you have to remind them, "Hey, it's time to go

home" and/or, "Hey, I sat down to work on this project and thought I had 20 minutes on it, or whatever, and pretty soon two hours have gone by because I was so interested in investing that in."

When I hear my students say those kind of things, that's an indicator they're finding that motivation within it to work. And, I think a lot of times that relates back to these gaming elements. And finally, what can I do to help them so that they want to come back? They want to reinvest that effort. Think those are important questions. Hopefully, you have gained something out of this short little video so that you can see what type of gaming elements might help within your online instruction. Best of luck with it. Thanks. Bye.

[Closing]
A huge thank you goes out to our guest speaker, Tim, for taking the time to share his story and ideas. And thank you, to our listeners, for taking the time to tune in to this episode. Please be sure to check back for new releases and if you have ideas or stories you would like to share, please email the innovative learning team at innovativelearningteam@purdue.edu. Our music credit for this episode goes to bensound.com.