

Thinking about Bingo



Bingo is a fun and versatile teaching tool, commonly used by teachers for content or skill acquisition. Like other competitive classroom games, Bingo invites a range of emotional responses in students depending on their luck, skill and ability to manage high and low feelings. These very same emotional responses are at play when we gamble, which makes sense considering Bingo was once a common gambling game (and is still played today by many people, especially in association with charity and church fundraisers).

Playing a game that is also used in gambling can provide teachers with a good opportunity for normalizing conversation around how we need to learn how to be aware of our emotions and develop ways to manage them.

Instructional strategies

1. Play a round of bingo (or any bingo-like game) as part of the lesson you're teaching. Then take a break before continuing to ask a few questions about how playing the game felt, and why. For example, you might ask:
 - a. How does playing bingo feel? How would you describe playing bingo?
 - b. Would you like to play another round? Why or why not?
 - c. What things were you saying to yourself while you were playing the game? Why?
 - d. What was going on in your body while you were playing? Was it a good feeling or bad feeling or something else?
2. Play more rounds (as many as you would normally do), but, before getting started, ask students to be aware of what's going on in their minds and bodies while they are playing. Afterward, have students consider the following questions, as a class or in small groups:
 - a. How did it feel this time? Was it the same or different?
 - b. Do you think it is ever possible to be too emotionally engaged in a game? What would that feel like? What would it look like?
 - c. What do you think makes games fun (exciting)? Could a game ever be too exciting? Explain.
 - d. Can playing a game lead to problems? If so, how can you have fun playing games but make sure playing doesn't lead to problems?

Note:

Playing social games like bingo releases feel-good chemicals in our brains, increasing arousal and excitement, especially if prizes are on the line. But feeling too excited can be risky for people with lower impulse control. For example, they may be tempted to spend more time and money than they intended in anticipation of winning or to try making up for losses.



Gambling competencies

Big idea

- Gambling can be a fun recreational activity but can also lead to significant harm

Competencies

- Explore and appreciate the diverse cognitive, social, emotional and physical factors that impact gambling behaviour
- Develop personal and social skills to reflect on and manage personal behaviour and choices related to gambling

For a complete look at the gambling literacy competencies, as defined by the Centre for Addictions Research of BC, see: <http://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/cisur/assets/docs/iminds/hs-gambling-curriculum.pdf>

Links to Curriculum

First Peoples' principles of learning

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity