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FANschool

urning students into fans of learning

Eric Nelson (FANschool)

Abstract

FANschool turns students into fans of learning with fantasy sports-like games for school content + current events. Our “geopolitics” vertical started in Eric’s classroom to get students interacting with current events and is now played by more than 1,500 paying classrooms throughout the U.S. and the world. Students draft teams of countries, become more aware, and get points every time their countries are mentioned in the news or make moves on a conflict-collaboration tone scale. A U.S. states version of the game and a March Madness round-like challenge for the Electoral College will also be available in August.

Introduction

More current events content is produced than ever before, yet students are increasingly disengaged with it. FANSCHOOL.org turns students into fans of learning with fantasy sports-like games for school content + current events. Picture students drafting countries or states, rather than football players, and March Madness prediction-like contests for big events like Elections, Olympics, and the World Cup.

We’re on a mission to connect classrooms to content in a more fun, authentic, networked, and strategic way and intrinsically motivate students to create daily current events reading habits inside and outside the classroom.

Eric created the FANgeopolitics vertical in his high school social studies classroom to “gamify” world news and engage students in curriculum. Students drafted teams of countries, followed them in the news, and adjusted their lineups and traded countries as they became more aware about what’s happening in the world, automatically scoring points every time their countries were mentioned in the news or made moves on a conflict-cooperation tone scale.

It dramatically improved engagement, news interaction, and test scores. The game received national attention from publications like Mashable, Techstars, and the New York Times, as well as support and awards from national education organizations like 4.0 Schools, Edsurge, and the Software and Information Industry Association (search “fantasy geopolitics” for more).

More than 1,500 teachers and schools paid to use it the past two school years. Students say they’re most engaged in class when playing and that it increases awareness about the broader world. Teachers say

students love seeing the changes in trends and scores and that students actually want to read the news and dive into learning about it more.

100% of surveyed teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that it had a “tangible positive benefit on student performance and engagement” in their classroom. Additionally, thirty-two percent of teachers said it improved student grades.

We’re winning in the marketplace because we put people and purpose first. Our team is growing, our teacher-customers are our biggest evangelists, and we have some of the best mentors in education technology and fantasy sports!

Links:

www.fanschool.org

YouTube playlist with how-tos + demos:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQX6Xj7dft90hvDsrZIHrtK9fXFQzB-k>

What teachers and students are saying:

“Students are learning in independent ways I’ve never seen before in 18 years of teaching...” – Mrs. Kristin Davis, teacher, Madison WI

“FANgeopolitics is beneficial because it keeps us all involved in what’s happening in the world... and makes you want to learn something new.” –Sammi B., 10th grade

“Having it be a competition pushed me to do my best. It was the only reason I came to class” –Ty N., 12th grade

Publicity:

- <http://www.techstars.com/content/uncategorized/make-way-edupreneurs>
- <http://mashable.com/2014/02/02/high-school-fantasy-geopolitics>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6RsTx3IabM>
- <http://www.engadget.com/2015/09/04/fantasy-sports-in-schools>

Value Proposition:

The FANschool platform gamifies school content and news, delivers global information sources to students, and provides standards-based resources to teachers.

Development Stage:

- Validated problem with other teachers as part of 4.0 Schools Launch program.
- Crowdfunded \$12,700 through Kickstarter Campaign, got first paying users.
- Awarded SIIA's Education Technology Industry Network's "Most Innovative".
- 1500+ paying teachers. 150,000+ students impacted. Early data similar to fantasy sports



Eric Nelson, CEO



**Abby Larner,
Chief Designer**



Jeff Deitch, CTO