SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

RESEARCH TALK & DISCUSSION

HOW CAN GAMES HELP US LEARN FROM LOSS?

Designing Playful Learning Experiences

Keyword: Playful Design, Gamification, Game-Based Learning, Instructional Design, Well-Being

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Thursday, November 12, 2026
12:30–1:20 p.m. | Room 113, Hannon Library

ABOUT THE TALK

How can games help us learn from loss? And how can we design learning experiences that encourage students to engage with topics or activities they find difficult, uncomfortable, or even frightening?

In this interactive session, Tom Sakai will introduce his research on games that simulate experiences of loss, exploring how playful design can support meaningful learning and reflection. Participants will also share their own learning experiences and teaching practices, considering how games and playful approaches might help students overcome barriers to learning.

The session invites a broader discussion about designing learning experiences that inspire curiosity, exploration, and personal growth. These ideas may be relevant across education, psychology, business, career development, health, and well-being.

OPEN DISCUSSION

All SOU faculty and staff are welcome!
Bring your questions and ideas! After the talk, let's discuss how educational games could support teaching, career development, staff training, health, well-being, and other fields.
Computer-assisted simultaneous interpretation will be available.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr. Sakai studies gamification, playful design, and serious games for personal growth, resilience, and well-being. His work bridges educational technology, psychology, and thanatology, and he has led more than 1,000 mental-health and well-being trainings and workshops since 2003.

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