THE BRIDGE

MODULE 2:
Am I in control?

Contents

Introduction

In Module 2, students will gain an insight into the way online games work. They will explore the elements of online games that are designed to keep them engaged, spending money and playing for long periods. This module will consider, and help students understand, some of the tactics used in games to influence their behaviour, and the effects risky gaming can have on their health, wellbeing and relationships.

Program overview

MODULE 1	MODULE 2	MODULE 3	MODULE 4
How does gaming make me feel? Physical and emotional responses to online gaming.	Am I in control? How online games keep you playing.	Am I risking what I love? Understanding the risks of unsafe gaming.	How can I look after myself and my friends? Strategies for balancing safe gaming, self-care and helping others.
3 x 90-min lessons	3 x 90-min lessons	2 x 90-min lessons	5 x 20-min activities
Video 1 – The gift 3-5 mins	Video 2 – The journey 3-5 mins	Video 3 – The bridge 3-5 mins	
Discussions 15–30 mins	Discussions 15–30 mins	Discussions 15–30 mins	
Kinaesthetic learning activities 5 x 30–60 mins	Kinaesthetic learning activities 5 x 30–60 mins	Kinaesthetic learning activities 2 x 30–60 mins	Kinaesthetic learning activities 5 x 20 mins
Worksheet – Activity 1.1 Personal values cards Worksheet – Activity 1.2 The full picture	Worksheet – Activity 2.5 Game over		Worksheet – Activity 4.2 Crossing the bridge

YOU ARE HERE!
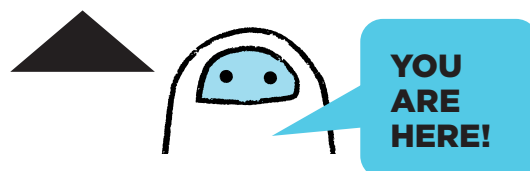
Learning activities summary

	LESSON 1: Tricks of the trade (part 1)	LESSON 2: Tricks of the trade (part 2)	LESSON 3: Are you in control of the game?
Starters	1. Review of previous themes 2. Pre-assessment Know / Wonder / Learned (KWL) chart 3. Key words chart 4. Watch Video 2 – The journey		
Discussion themes	**Theme 2.1** Tricks of the trade (part 1) How video game designers keep us playing through: • **bright colours** • **bells and whistles** • **chasing wins** • **near misses**.	**Theme 2.1** Tricks of the trade (part 2) How video game designers keep us playing through: • **grinding** • **free to play** • **random rewards** • **variable timing**.	**Theme 2.2** Are you in control of the game? **Theme 2.3** Are you in control of your emotions? **Theme 2.4** The line starts to blur **Theme 2.5** Choice **Theme 2.6** Conflict
Essential kinaesthetic learning activities	**Activity 2.1** **What's the sound of... (drama)** How sound in games can influence us.	**Activity 2.2** **Grinding (drama game)** How online games keep us playing. **Activity 2.3** **What's in the loot box? (art/drama)** Making a loot box to explore **random rewards**.	**Extension activity 2.4** **Avatar in trouble (art)** The physical and emotional effects of risky gaming. See **Appendix B** **Extension activity 2.5** **Game over (drama)** Negotiating gaming time with adults. See **Appendix B**

> **NOTE:**
>
> Words highlighted in **blue** can be found in **Key terms and concepts for The Bridge**.
>
> Story summary for Video 2 is found in **Appendix A**.

Learning intentions

- To understand how computer games are designed to keep us playing.

- To understand how online games can influence our feelings and behaviour.

- To understand how this can affect our interactions with others.

Success criteria

- Identified the ways online games keep us playing.

- Explained that online games can influence our feelings and behaviour.

- Understood how this can affect our interactions with others.

Essential questions

- How do games keep us playing?
- Do games influence our feelings and behaviour?
- How does gaming affect our interactions with others?

Key terms and concepts

- **Bells and whistles** are the bright colours, flashing visuals and exciting sounds a player comes to associate with winning.

- **Bright colours** make the experience of online gaming exciting, attractive and fun. Designers use bright colours in games to attract your attention, keep you engaged, and enhance the emotions you experience while playing.

- **Chasing wins** describes the urge to keep playing to recapture the great feeling players get when winning points or valuable items, even if this occurs less and less frequently. Online games often ensure there are just enough wins to keep people playing.

- **Free-to-play** online games often include 'pay-to-play' options or tempting microtransactions such as loot boxes.

- **Grinding** is a simple, repetitive activity within a game that a player must do to achieve a goal or advantage within the game.

- **Loot boxes** are like virtual lucky dips. Generally players pay to open them, not knowing whether the contents are valuable or worthless. Often compared to gambling because the player risks something of value for the chance to win something of greater value, loot boxes are one of the main ways online game developers make money.

- **Near misses** occur when a player almost wins a point, or something of value, but just misses out.

- **Random rewards** are prizes offered to online game players for certain actions, or simply at random intervals. The rewards can be worthless or very valuable, and can be traded with other players in online games.

Tricks of the trade (part 1)

Lesson overview

Lesson 1 explores how online games use 'tricks of the trade' to keep us playing. Students will discuss the various elements of online games that are designed to encourage players to spend money and play for longer, such as bright colours, bells and whistles, chasing wins and near misses.

Learning activities

Classroom resources	• Know / Wonder / Learned (KWL) chart • Large blank paper • Worksheets – Activity 1.1 Personal Value Cards (see Module 1) • Video 2 – The journey
Starters and activity sheets (30 mins)	**1.** Review past themes and Helmette's journey so far **2.** Pre-assessment KWL chart **3.** Key words chart **4.** Watch video 2
Discussion themes (30 mins)	**Theme 2.1:** Tricks of the trade (part 1) Bright colours, bells and whistles, chasing wins, near misses.
Kinaesthetic learning activity (30+ mins)	**Activity 2.1:** What's the sound of... (drama)

Assessment notes

The following learning intentions are linked to themes and activities that can be assessed using the suggested Victorian curriculum domains listed in **Appendix C**.

LEARNING INTENTIONS	THEMES / ACTIVITIES	DOMAINS
To understand how online games keep us playing. To understand that online games can influence our feelings and behaviour.	**Theme 2.1:** Tricks of the trade	Critical and creative thinking Health and physical education
	Activity 2.1: What's the sound of... (drama)	English Drama

Lesson 1: Starters (30 mins)

1	Review (10 mins)	Review key themes in previous lesson and Helmette's journey so far.
2	KWL chart (10 mins)	Add any notes to the KWL chart.
3	Key words chart (5 mins)	Once students have finished with their KWL charts, add to the key words chart.
4	Watch Video 2 (5 mins)	**INTRODUCE** In this video we explore the elements of online games that are designed to keep us playing. The young co-designers of The Bridge program call these the 'tricks computer games play behind our backs'. **PLAY** Video 2 from start to finish (3 mins). Captions can be turned on or off. **STOP** at key points to discuss the themes (see next section). **INVITE** Reflections on the video: • What happens in this story? • How has the story changed since the previous video? • What happens to Helmette? • What is Helmet Head's (the avatar's) journey? Refer to **Appendix A** for the story summary.

DID YOU KNOW?

Loot boxes are one of the main ways online game developers make money.

Lesson 1: Discussion themes (30 mins)

Theme 2.1 Tricks of the trade (part 1)

Tricks of the trade asks students to take a deep dive into Video 2, watching closely to identify what tactics (or 'tricks') The Bridge video game uses to keep Helmette playing. This activity focuses on four tactics: **bright colours**, **bells and whistles**, **chasing wins** and **near misses**.

RESOURCES:

• video 2 – The journey

• writing materials.

PLAY Video 2 through again and ask students to record each time they suspect a trick is being used to keep Helmette playing.

ASK

The Bridge game uses eight tricks to keep Helmette playing. What are they?

1. **Bright colours**

2. **Bells and whistles**

3. **Chasing wins**

4. **Near misses**

5. Grinding

6. Free-to-play

7. Random rewards

8. Variable timing

In this lesson, we will explore the first four: bright colours, bells and whistles, chasing wins and near misses.

Trick 1: Bright colours

PLAY Video 2 reference: 00.26

The game is very brightly coloured, but each time Helmet Head loses, the game loses colour and Helmette loses gold.

ASK

• Why do most computer games use bright colours?

  Bright colours make the experience of online gaming exciting, attractive and fun. They attract your attention, keep you engaged, and enhance the emotions you experience while playing.

• What are some of the emotions you might experience when playing an online game?

• What colours would you associate with these emotions?

• Have you noticed the way bright colours are used in the games you play? How?

Trick 2: Bells and whistles

PLAY Video 2 reference: 01.38

Helmet Head defeats the dog monster.

ASK

• What changes in the game at this moment?

Possible response:

> When Helmet Head defeats the dog monster, bright colours flash, happy music plays, cash registers jingle, and gold bars pile up in the corner of the screen. These all trigger the release of dopamine in the player, creating the 'feel-good' effect.

• Why do you think this happens?

EXPLAIN

When you open a **loot box** or win points in an online game, you will often see **bright colours** and flashing animations, and hear exciting sounds. Players learn to associate these sights and sounds, often referred to as **bells and whistles**, with winning.

Bells and whistles are designed to stimulate the release of **dopamine**, making the emotional experience of winning even stronger and reinforcing the desire to keep playing. This tactic is used by designers in both the gaming and gambling industries.

Trick 3: Chasing wins

PLAY Video 2 references: 00.13 / 01.23

The monsters start winning.

ASK

• Has the game become more difficult? Why?

• If games get more difficult as you level up – do you stop playing?

• Describe some examples of when you have experienced this in the games you play.

Possible responses:

> Games are designed to get more difficult as you progress, meaning you have to play harder and longer to get the same number of wins you achieved at previous levels.

> A player will keep playing to recapture the great feeling of winning a valuable item from opening a loot box, even if this occurs less and less frequently. The game will ensure there are always just enough wins to keep you playing.

Trick 4: Near misses

PLAY Video 2 reference: 00.49

Helmet Head appears to defeat the electric monster but is zapped and killed again.

ASK

- What emotions does Helmette feel when killing, and then being killed by, the electric monster?

  Initially Helmette is elated, but quickly becomes frustrated, yet continues to play.

- Does this make Helmette want to stop playing?

  No. A near miss encourages a player to keep chasing wins.

EXPLAIN

A near miss can be so exciting that it feels almost as good as a win, and we may think that with enough practice, next time we might actually win.

Practice can help us improve our skills in a range of activities, like sport, study or music, but that's not usually the case with online gaming. Some games are designed so that no matter what we do, the game will always decide if and when we'll win. No matter how much we practice, we'll never beat the game.

Science has shown that every time we experience a near miss, our brain tells us that we can win. The brain releases the same feel-good hormone, **dopamine**, when we have a near miss as it does when we win, which puts us in a good mood even though we're actually losing.

Gambling companies know this, so they design near misses into games. Remember this next time you get that near miss feeling, and remind yourself that your brain is playing tricks on you.

REFLECTION

- How do you feel when you think you have won in a game – only to then lose?

- Does it make you want to give up? Or keep playing? Why do you think that might be?

Lesson 1: Essential kinaesthetic learning activity

Activity 2.1 What's the sound of... (drama)

'What's the sound of...' is a fun, hands-on drama activity for exploring how sound can influence players of online games. By developing an awareness and understanding of how sound is used in online games, students will be able to recognise the effects and respond from a place of knowledge.

Duration: 20–30 mins

RESOURCES:

• Video 2 – The journey

Activity instructions:

WATCH Video 2 with the sound turned off.

ASK

• In the video, where do you think sound may be used to get a response from the viewer?

Record student responses on a board.

Ask students to re-create these sounds.

WRITE the following six scene headings on the board:

Scene 1: Helmette is trying to destroy the monsters (0–35 seconds)

Scene 2: Helmette must pay to keep playing (35 secs to 57 seconds)

Scene 3: Helmette puts in more money and starts grinding (57 secs – 1.21)

Scene 4: Helmette wins a hockey stick from a loot box (1.21 – 1.50)

Scene 5: Helmette reaches the River of Forgetting (1.50–2.20)

Scene 6: Helmette runs at the Bridge with the hockey stick ready to strike (2.20–2.35)

PLAY Video 2 without sound again, pausing at each scene.

Divide the class into six groups. Assign a scene to each group.

EXPLAIN

Each group practices making sounds to go with their scene. Ask students to create sounds that will match the action and sounds that will contradict it, e.g. Helmet Head runs from a monster – students could create fast sounds or music to match the action, and a lullaby to contradict it.

PLAY Video 2 again with sound off.

Each group performs the sound scapes for their allocated scene. Ask students to notice how the audience responds to sounds that match the scenes and sounds that contradict it.

REFLECTION

- What sounds kept everyone engaged and why?

- What sounds broke the moment or made the audience laugh? Why?

Sound is a powerful element that can be used to influence an audience. Sounds form a component of the **bells and whistles** used in online games to keep you playing.

Tricks of the trade (part 2)
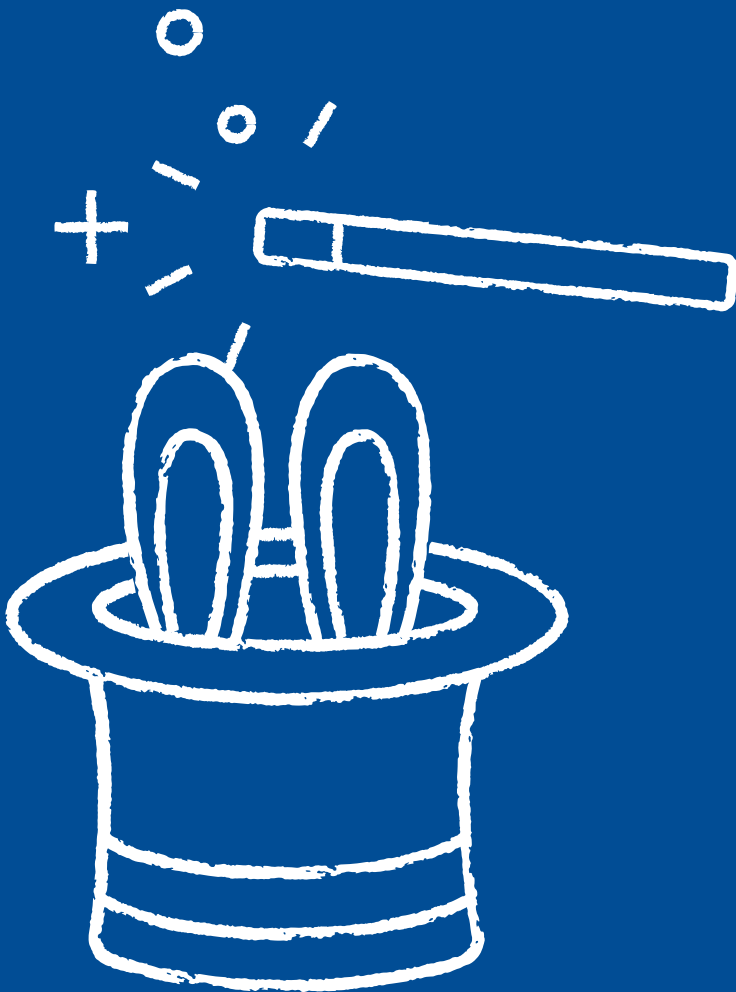
Lesson overview

In this lesson, students will continue to explore how online games use 'tricks of the trade' to keep people playing. They will discuss elements of online games that are designed to encourage players to spend money and keep playing for long periods. These include **grinding**, **random rewards**, **free to play** and **variable timing**.

Learning activities

Classroom resources	• Know / Wonder / Learned (KWL) chart • Key word chart • Large blank paper • Video 2 – The journey
Starters and activity sheets (30 mins)	**1.** Review past themes and Helmette's journey **2.** KWL chart **3.** Key words chart **4.** Watch video 2
Discussion themes (30 mins)	**Theme 2.1:** Tricks of the trade (part 2) • grinding • free to play • random rewards • variable timing
Kinaesthetic learning activity (30+ mins)	**Activity 2.2:** Grinding (drama game) How investing time and money can keep us playing online games. **Activity 2.3:** What's in the loot box? (art/drama) Students make a loot box and develop rewards of high and low value. This activity is revisited in **Module 3, Activity 3.2**.

Assessment notes

The following learning intentions are linked to themes and activities that can be assessed using the suggested Victorian curriculum domains listed in **Appendix C**.

LEARNING INTENTIONS	THEMES / ACTIVITIES	DOMAINS
To understand how online games keep us playing. To understand that online games can influence our feelings and behaviour.	**Theme 2.1:** Tricks of the trade (part 2)	Critical and creative thinking
	Activity 2.2: Grinding (drama game)	Drama English Personal and social capability
	Activity 2.3: What's in the loot box? (art/drama)	English Drama Visual arts

Lesson 2: Starters (30 mins)

1	**Review** **(10 mins)**	Review key themes in previous lesson and review Helmette's journey so far.
2	**KWL chart** **(10 mins)**	Add any notes on the KWL chart.
3	**Key words chart** **(5 mins)**	Once students have finished with their KWL charts, add to the key words chart.
4	**Watch** **Video 2** **(5 mins)**	**INTRODUCE** In this video we explore the elements of online games that are designed to keep us playing. The young co-designers of The Bridge call these the 'tricks online games play behind our backs'. **PLAY** Video 2 from start to finish (3 mins). Captions can be turned on or off. **STOP** at key points to discuss the themes (see next section). Refer to **Appendix A** for the story summary.

Lesson 2: Discussion themes (30 mins)

Theme 2.1 Tricks of the trade (part 2)

In Lesson 2, students take a deep dive into Video 2, watching closely to identify tactics (or 'tricks') The Bridge game uses to keep Helmette playing. This activity focuses on **grinding**, **free to play**, **random rewards** and **variable timing**.

PLAY

Play video 2 through again and ask students to write down each time they suspect a trick is being used to keep Helmette playing.

ASK

The Bridge game uses eight tricks to keep Helmette playing. What are they?

- Bright colours

- Bells and whistles

- Chasing wins

- Near misses

- **Grinding**

- **Free to play**

- **Random rewards**

- **Variable timing**

In this lesson, we will explore tricks five to eight: grinding, free to play, random rewards and variable timing.

Trick 5: Grinding

PLAY Video 2 references: 00.29 / 00.39 / 00.54

The game stops and signs appear that say, Plant 100 trees or buy 10 gold bars, Pat 500 dogs or pay 50 gold bars, and Plant 1000 daisies or buy 100 gold bars.

ASK

- When the game pauses and the signs appear – is the game over?

  Helmet Head appears lifeless and all the gold has disappeared. However, the game offers Helmet Head ways to keep playing. Helmette is given a choice between completing a boring, repetitive activity such as planting 100 trees or spending money to buy 10 gold bars.

- What does Helmette do to keep playing?

  Helmette chooses to spend money and pours coins from a piggy bank into the computer to keep playing.

- Why do you think Helmette chooses to pay money to keep playing?

  Helmette knows that planting trees and daisies will be boring and time consuming, so decides to pay money to get back into the game more quickly.

  However, Helmette eventually runs out of money and has no choice but to plant daisies to continue playing.

EXPLAIN

Grinding is a simple, repetitive and often boring activity in online games that usually has nothing to do with the core action. Grinding may be used to increase a player/avatar's strength or power or help them advance to the next level in a game.

Grinding can make you feel more invested in the game, more likely to play longer and more often.

Online games frequently offer shortcuts to avoid grinding in exchange for payment. This is one of the key methods used by game designers to make money. Small payments to avoid grinding can quickly add up!

REFLECTION

• Share examples of grinding you've experienced in games you've played.

NOTE:

Grinding is explored further in **Activity 2.2 Grinding (drama game)**.

Trick 6: Free to play (or is it?)

PLAY Video 2 reference: 00.33 / 00.39 / 00.54

Helmette chooses to pour money into the computer rather than plant trees, but eventually runs out of money and must plants daisies to keep playing.

ASK

• Why does Helmette choose to pay money instead of planting trees?

• Why does it get more expensive each time Helmet Head dies in the game?

• What are some of the other ways you can spend money in online games?

EXPLAIN

Many online games are **free to play** at the start, but as you are drawn further into the game you are offered more and more enticing options to spend money. For instance, some games require payment to purchase **skins**, progress to higher levels, avoid grinding or skip ads while waiting to play.

If you are playing online games with a group of friends, there can be a lot of pressure to purchase the latest skins and game levels. These inexpensive purchases are called microtransactions and can easily add up over time to become very expensive.

REFLECTION

• Have you ever spent your own money (or someone else's) in a game?

• How did it feel? Why?

DID YOU KNOW?

Small purchases in games are called microtransactions and can easily add up over time to become very expensive.

Trick 7: Random rewards

PLAY Video 2 reference: 01.34

A **loot box** randomly appears in the game. Helmet Head pulls out a hockey stick.

ASK

- What do you think Helmette was hoping to find in the loot box?

- Do you think a hockey stick would be a great reward?

EXPLAIN

Online games sometimes offer players **random rewards** for certain actions, or simply at random intervals. The rewards can be worthless or very valuable, and can be traded with other players.

Random rewards can trigger the release of the feel-good hormone, **dopamine**, in the brain, increasing the player's desire to continue playing.

REFLECTION

- What random rewards have you received in games?

- What might be a great reward in the games you play?

- Do you like the surprise aspect of loot boxes and similar rewards in games? How does it make you feel?

- How do you think random rewards might help to keep you playing?

Trick 8: Variable timing

ASK

- Does Helmette win every time a monster comes near?

  No. Sometimes Helmette wins a lot, and other times not at all. This doesn't seem to be related to Helmette's playing skills.

EXPLAIN

When a player begins a new game, the wins come frequently and regularly.

As players progress, or level up, the wins become infrequent and random.

This is known as **variable timing** and, along with random rewards, is used by designers to keep the player glued to the game because they don't know when the next win might occur.

REFLECTION

- When you play a game, do you win every time?

- If you won every time would the game be more, or less, interesting?

- How do you think this would affect how much you play?

Discuss the students' experiences with variable timing in games.

Lesson 2: Essential kinaesthetic learning activities

Activity 2.2 Grinding (drama game)

In Video 2, Helmette is forced to perform a boring and repetitive task such as planting 1000 daisies before moving to the next level. This kind of task in online games is called grinding.

In this drama activity students will explore the choices they are required to make when playing online games. During the activity, students will be asked what they are prepared to do in order to get something they want.

There are no right or wrong answers and students are encouraged to analyse the decisions they make and the consequences of their choices.

Duration: 10+ mins, can be periodic to suit class.
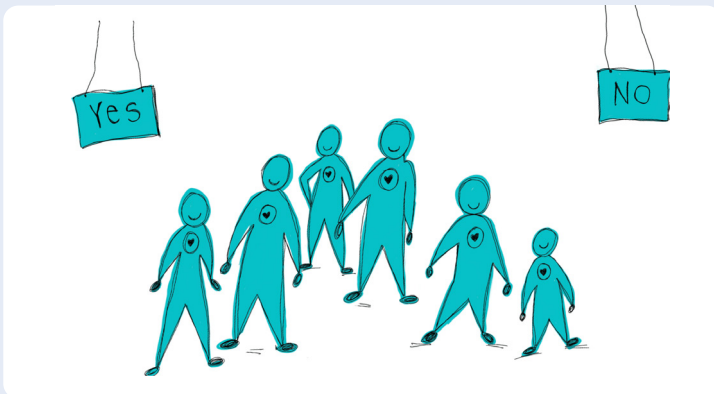
Resources: N/A

Activity instructions:

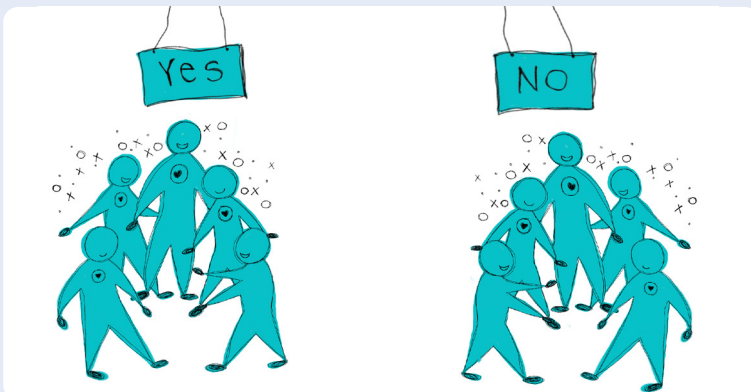All students stand in the middle of the room.

Designate one side of the room as **YES** and the opposite side of the room as **NO**.

EXPLAIN

When I call out a question, move to the YES or NO side of the room according to your answer. There are no right or wrong answers.

At times ask students to explain their choices.

ASK

- Are you happy to do a really boring chore for half-an-hour if you get to play a game after that? YES or NO

- Do you enjoy practicing something over and over, like a musical instrument, sport, dance, or song? YES or NO

- In online games, do you enjoy practicing something over and over? YES or NO

- If you'd spent a lot of time practising something – online or offline – would you find it difficult to give it up and never do it again? YES or NO

ASK

In many games you may have to grind to build up game credits or points.

- Do you like cleaning the house? YES or NO

- Would you spend two hours cleaning the house in exchange for money? YES or NO

- Would you spend three hours cleaning the house in exchange for spending time with your friends? YES or NO

- Would you spend four hours cleaning the house in exchange for playing your favourite video game? YES or NO

ASK

Some games use ads between levels to make you wait before going to the next stage or level. This is one of the ways online games make you grind. It forces you to invest more time in the game so you will be less likely to stop playing.

- Do you get frustrated when you have to watch ads to keep playing a game? YES or NO

- Do you take a short break when there's an ad between levels? YES or NO

ASK

Some tasks are boring, undesirable and take a lot of time to complete.

- What are you prepared to do to play a game you love?

- Would you rather take an hour to cut a lawn with scissors (point to left side of room) or change a baby's dirty nappy (point to right side of room) to play a game tonight?
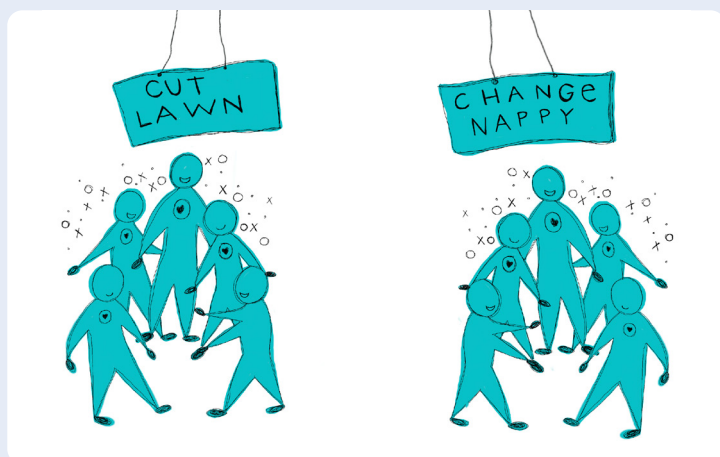
- Would you prefer to get really wet and muddy taking a shortcut home from school (point left) or walk the long way home and stay dry (point right)?

- Would you choose to do 20 push-ups (point left) or pay $20 (point right)?

- Would you rather receive one new video game right now (point left), or wait months until your next birthday and get a whole pile of presents and video games (point right)?

REFLECTION

- What does it mean to have choices?

- Was there a question the whole class agreed with?

- How do you feel about trading lots of time and a boring chore for something you want?

- In games, do you ever do things that you don't really want to do? Why? How does this make you feel?

- What does grinding mean in an online game? Why do games have grinding?

- What influences you to make the choices you make when you play online games?

Activity 2.3 What's in the loot box? (art/drama)

This activity highlights the chance element of loot boxes and their similarity to gambling. Students will work together to create a class loot box and play a game called, 'What's in the loot box?'

This game asks students to spontaneously name things they consider to be a valuable prize or a horrible prize. As the game progresses the likelihood of winning horrible prizes becomes more apparent.

Duration:

Art activity: 45 mins

Drama game activity: 15+ mins

Resources:

- cardboard box

- art materials such as coloured paper, paint etc.

- pens and one A4 sheet of paper.

Activity instructions: Part 1 – creating a loot box

Duration: 45 mins

Resources:

- cardboard box large enough for students to reach in and pull-out pieces of paper

- decorative materials such as coloured paper, paint etc.

Use the cardboard box as the basis for a class loot box and discuss with students how they would like to decorate it e.g. with paint, text, coloured paper etc. Be as creative as you like.

Make sure the loot box has a lid that opens and closes, or a hole that you can reach your hand into to pull out pieces of paper.

Examples:
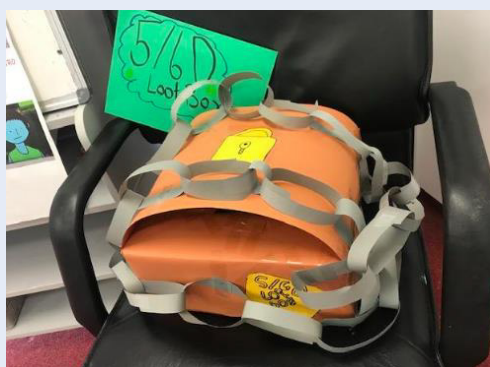
Activity instructions: Part 2 – drama game

Duration: 15+ mins

Resources:

- class loot box
- pens and one A4 sheet of paper.

Students stand in a circle with the loot box in the middle.

ASK students one-by-one to step into the middle of the circle, put their hand into the loot box and pretend to pull out a prize they really love. Students will describe the imaginary prize they have pulled out of the loot box to the class.

For example, 'I won a new bike!' or 'I won a new skin for my avatar!' or 'I won no homework for a week!'

ENCOURAGE students to cheer each other's imaginary prizes.

Now **ASK** students to pretend to pull out a prize they don't like and describe the horrible prize to the class.

For example, 'I won a week-old sausage roll!' or 'I won a cardboard sword!' or 'I won picking up rubbish in the playground for a week!'

ENCOURAGE the students to boo at the horrible prizes.

ASK students to return to their tables and cut or tear their A4 pieces of paper in half. Then get them to write down a winning prize on one piece of paper and a horrible prize on the other.

Students then fold their pieces of paper and put them in the class loot box.
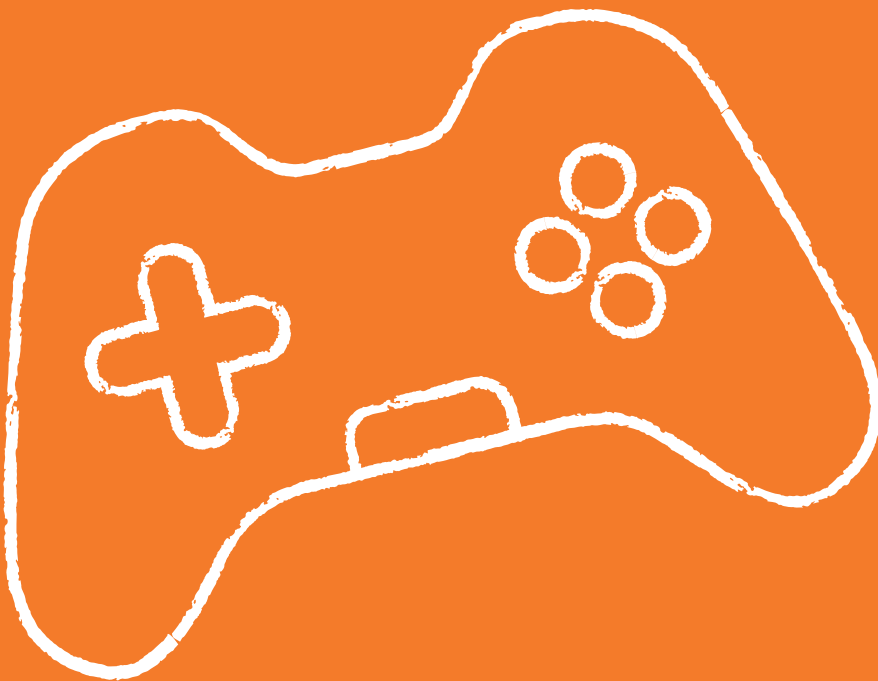
> ### NOTE:
>
> This loot box full of prizes will be used in **Module 3, Activity 3.2 Trading values cards (creative game)**.
>
> Before commencing Module 3, secretly remove most of the winning prizes, leaving all the horrible prizes in the loot box. It is important that students believe the box contains an equal number of both.

LESSON 3:

Are you in control of the game?

Lesson overview

This lesson explores how online games can influence our feelings and behaviour and how this can affect our interactions with others.

Learning activities

Classroom resources	• Know / Wonder / Learned (KWL) chart • large blank paper • video 2 – The journey
Starters and activity sheets **(30 mins)**	**1.** Review past themes and Helmette's journey **2.** KWL chart **3.** Key words chart **4.** Watch video 2
Discussion themes **(30 mins)**	**Theme 2.2:** Are you in control of the game? **Theme 2.3:** Are you in control of your emotions? **Theme 2.4:** The line starts to blur **Theme 2.5:** Choice **Theme 2.6:** Conflict
Kinaesthetic learning activity	N/A
Extension activity **(30+ mins)**	See **Appendix B** **Extension activity 2.4:** Avatar in trouble (art) **Extension activity 2.5:** Game over (drama) Print **Worksheet – Extension activity 2.5 Game over**

Assessment notes

The following learning intentions are linked to themes and activities that can be assessed using the suggested Victorian Curriculum domains listed in **Appendix C**.

LEARNING INTENTIONS	THEMES / ACTIVITIES	DOMAINS
To understand that online games can influence our feelings and behaviour.	**Theme 2.2:** Are you in control of the game? **Theme 2.3:** Are you in control of your emotions?	Critical and creative thinking English Personal and social capability Health and physical education

LEARNING INTENTIONS	THEMES / ACTIVITIES	DOMAINS
To understand how games can affect our interactions with others.	**Theme 2.4:** The line starts to blur **Theme 2.5:** Choice **Theme 2.6:** Conflict	English Personal and social capability Health and physical education
	Extension activity 2.4: Avatar in trouble (art)	Visual arts Personal and social capability
	Extension activity 2.5: Game over (drama)	Critical and creative thinking Drama English Ethical capability Health and physical education

Lesson 3: Starters (30 mins)

1	**Review** **(10 mins)**	Review key themes in previous lesson and review Helmette's journey so far.
2	**KWL chart** **(10 mins)**	Add any notes in the KWL chart.
3	**Key words chart** **(5 mins)**	Once students have finished with their KWL charts, add to the key words chart.
4	**Watch video 2** **(5 min)** 	**PLAY** Video 2 from start to finish (3 mins). Captions can be turned on or off. **STOP** at key points to discuss the themes (see next section).

Lesson 3: Discussion themes (30 mins)

Theme 2.2 Are you in control of the game?

In this lesson, students will consider how online games can influence our feelings and behaviour. Students will explore how online games learn player behaviour to keep the player engaged, ensuring they play more often and for long periods of time.

PLAY Video 2 reference: 01:15

Kids and Astro run past Helmette's bedroom window.

ASK

- Why do we see the kids and Astro running in the park?

  They are having fun outside.

- Do you think they are having more, or less, fun than Helmette at this moment?

PLAY Video 2 reference: 01:20

Helmette throws the keyboard on the desk.

ASK

- Why does Helmette throw the keyboard on the desk? What is Helmette feeling?

  Helmette is constantly losing and can't move ahead in the game. Consequently, Helmette is feeling frustrated and angry.

- Did you think Helmette was going to stop playing the game because of these feelings?

- What happens to prevent Helmette from stopping?

  Helmette wants to stop playing but is drawn back into the game by the flashing lights, sounds of winning, and gold bars.

EXPLAIN

Many online games can 'learn' player behaviour and change tactics to keep you playing, for example, by:

- tracking your play and adjusting the level of difficulty depending on your skill or success rate

- changing the level of difficulty based on your engagement with the game

- matching you with others online who are stronger or weaker players

- introducing random surprises, such as new maps or game modes.

REFLECTION

- Why do you think online games learn from your behaviour and change the game?

  Online games learn player behaviour to keep the player interested, which encourages them to play more often and for long periods of time.

- Why do you think online game designers want to keep you playing for as long as possible?

  Game designers know that the longer a person plays, the more likely they are to make in-game purchases, see more ads, or pay to upgrade to the premium or next version of a game. This is how they make their money.

Theme 2.3 Are you in control of your emotions?

This lesson gives students an opportunity to discuss ways to manage uncomfortable emotions such as frustration or anger and to share any strategies they use. Examples might include deep breathing, simple mindfulness activities, taking a break from the game, going for a walk or a run, throwing a ball against a wall, or talking with a friend or family member. Students can learn from each other's experiences or develop strategies themselves.

PLAY Video 2 reference: 01.42

Helmette dances around the bedroom. Lights are glowing around Helmette's head.

At this moment Helmette has experienced a series of wins in quick succession. The loot box is a win! Defeating the monster is a win! The gold bars piling up are a win! The bells and whistles and flashing lights reinforce the feeling of a *really* big win!

ASK

- How is Helmette feeling?

  Helmette just defeated the dog monster and is feeling excited and happy.

- Why does Helmette's head glow?

  Helmette is experiencing the feel-good effect of dopamine being released in the brain as the result of the big win, the flashing lights, bright colours and music.

- Only a moment ago Helmette was frustrated and angry – what do you think caused such a quick shift in emotions?

- Will this feeling be affected by the very next thing that happens in the game?

  Helmette's emotions are strongly influenced by what happens in the game.

REFLECTION

- Have you ever felt your emotions change while playing a game? Happy and excited at one moment, and then frustrated or angry?

- What did you do about it?

> **NOTE:**
>
> **Extension Activity 2.4 Avatar in trouble (art)** is a great activity after this discussion. See **Appendix B** for details.

Theme 2.4 The line starts to blur

PLAY Video 2 reference: 01.46

Inside the bedroom, Helmette is happy and dancing. Outside the window, two friends look at Astro, who is lying on the ground next to a broken hockey stick.

The line between Helmette and Helmet Head, and between real life and the game, is becoming less clear.

We have seen the hockey stick in Helmette's bedroom. It is one of Helmette's treasures.

The hockey stick has now become a weapon, and Astro has been hurt.

Helmette is no longer interested in anything but the game, forgetting treasured things like friends, pets, music, books and family.

ASK

- What do we see out the window while Helmette is happy and dancing inside?

- Why isn't Helmette looking after Astro?

- How has Helmette changed since the beginning of the story?

- Are you seeing any overlap between what is happening in the game and what is happening in Helmette's real life?

REFLECTION

- Have you ever become so involved in something, or wanted something so badly, that you behaved differently from your usual self?

- What was happening at the time? How did you feel?

Theme 2.5 Choice

This lesson encourages discussion about choice and how the choices we make can affect us and those around us.

PLAY Video 2 reference: 02.02

The monster says, 'do you dare cross the River of Forgetting? You might lose all you treasure! You have a choice…'

ASK

- What treasure is the monster referring to?

  The monster is referring to Helmette's personal treasures – pets, music, books, hockey, family, and friends.

REFLECTION

Helmette has a choice – do they go back now and not lose anything else? Or do they cross the bridge and risk losing everything they treasure?

- What choices could Helmette make at this point?

  Go deeper into the game (to cross 'The Bridge') and risk losing more than just piggy bank money, or…?

- Could things get worse for Helmette? If so, how?

Theme 2.6 Conflict

In this lesson, the students will consider options for negotiating with family and friends about the time they spend playing video games and learn about making compromises.

PLAY Video 2 reference: 02.15–02.30

Within the game, Helmet Head grabs the hockey stick and runs at the bridge. Back in the real world, a voice calls out for Helmette to stop playing. A hand pulls the plug from the wall and the computer screen goes black.

ASK

Helmette is no longer winning. The game has become a struggle, but Helmette is still engaged and can't stop playing.

- Why doesn't Helmette stop playing?

- Why does Helmette scream when the screen goes black?

REFLECTION

Online games are designed to make it very difficult to stop playing. Young people may argue with parents or others about the amount of time they spend playing online games, and get into trouble for ignoring responsibilities and not cooperating when asked to turn off the game to come to dinner, do homework, or go to bed.

- Do you think it was fair when Helmette's parent pulled the plug on the computer?

- How might Helmette have behaved differently? And Helmette's parent?

- If you were in this situation, how would you rewrite the end of the video to avoid conflict?

Possible responses:

- set time limits and stick to them

- discuss and agree on (negotiate) a time limit and do as agreed

- explain that you can't stop because you are at a critical part in the game but will stop as soon as possible

- share what's happening in the game, what you are doing and why.

> **NOTE:**
>
> **Extension Activity 2.5 – Game over (drama)** is a great activity after this discussion. See **Appendix B** for details.

Summary discussion questions

ASK students to summarise what has happened in Video 2.

- What has happened to Helmette?

- What has changed?

- Where did Helmette begin, and where is Helmette by the end?

- How would you describe the emotional journey Helmette has taken?

- What emotions has Helmette felt through this part of the story?

- What has prompted these emotions?

Appendixes
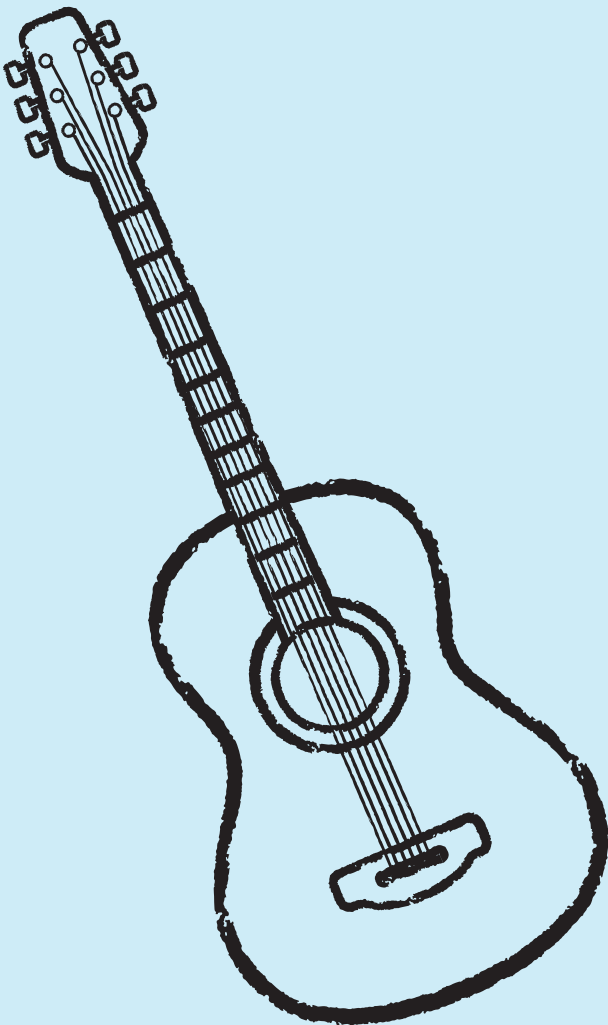
Appendix A: Story summary

Video 2 - The journey

The story takes a turn in this video.

Within the game, Helmette's avatar, Helmet Head is having difficulty destroying the monsters, the gold bars are disappearing, and the bright colours on the screen are fading.

Helmette must pay money to keep playing or spend time doing useless tasks (grinding).

Helmette is frustrated and angry with the game, lashing out by throwing down the keyboard, and about to give up and stop playing. But the game flashes back on with bright colours, music and the offer of free gold bars.

Helmette is winning again!

Helmet Head is being chased by a dog monster but wins a hockey stick in a loot box and destroys the monster.

Helmette is elated and doesn't notice that outside the bedroom window friends are gathered around Astro the dog, who is lying hurt on the ground next to Helmette's broken hockey stick.

Back in the game Helmet Head reaches the River of Forgetting, with the Mountain of Gold on the other side.

Helmette's parent asks for the computer to be turned off, but Helmette can't stop now that the bridge and its guardian monster have appeared!

The monster challenges Helmet Head to cross the bridge even though it could mean losing everything Helmette treasures. After a moment's hesitation, Helmette chooses to continue playing.

Helmet Head runs at the bridge with the hockey stick ready to strike but cannot get up the steps.

Helmette's parent gets more insistent about turning off the computer, but Helmette again ignores them.

Helmet Head is finally knocked off the bridge, just as Helmette's parent pulls the plug on the computer turning everything black.

Both Helmette and the avatar, Helmet Head, scream with frustration.

Appendix B: Extension activities

Extension activity 2.4 – Avatar in trouble (art)

This activity allows students to explore what their avatar might look like when they struggle or find themselves in a difficult situation. Students will also reflect on how their own bodies look and feel when they are frustrated and are no longer having fun.

Duration: 30+ mins

Resources:

- camera and printing paper
- printer
- laminator (optional)
- coloured or white paper
- Blutack or sticky tape
- scissors
- coloured markers or pencils.

Activity instructions:

- Ask students to strike a pose as their avatar when they are struggling, or when things are not going their way.
- Photograph each student in their chosen avatar pose (preferably against a plain backdrop).
- Print out photographs.
- Ask students to carefully cut around the shape of their body to create the avatar template.
- Optional: laminate the avatar template to make it sturdy.
- Ask students to design skins for their avatar template using coloured or white paper – decorate with markers or pencils, and textures.
- Attach skins to the avatar templates using sticky tape or Blutack.
- Optional: string up the avatar templates next to the original avatars created in **Module 1, Activity 1.5 Body mapping** to notice the differences in body language.

REFLECTION

- How does your avatar look when they are having trouble?
- Are your avatar's skins damaged?
- Does this look like you when you are feeling troubled or frustrated?

Extension Activity 2.5 Game over (drama)

This improvisation activity gives students an opportunity to reflect on the types of conversations and arguments they sometimes have with adults about online gaming. Students will improvise ways to improve these conversations so that compromise and agreements can be reached.

Through the practice of improvisation, students will learn the importance of actively listening to what the other person says and noticing how they say it. There is no right or wrong way to respond.

Duration: 15 mins

Resources:

• Worksheet – Extension activity 2.5 Game over.

Activity instructions:

PLAY Video 2 from start to finish.

EXPLAIN

At the end of Video 2, Helmette's parent suddenly pulls the plug on the game, causing Helmette to feel frustration and anger. Young people and adults often express frustration with each other at moments like this, which can make it more difficult to calmly discuss the situation later.

Preparation:

Ask for two volunteers to be person A and B in the improvisation scene.

Write or project the scripts from **Worksheet – Extension activity 2.5 Game over** on a board so persons A and B can see them.

EXPLAIN

In this drama activity we are going to do something called improvisation or 'improv'.

During improv, when a person speaks or performs an action it is called an 'offer'. Each new line/action offers something for another actor to respond to, which keeps the story moving along.

The key to improv is listening to what the other person says and how they say it.

There is no right or wrong way to respond but you should include a new offer for the other person, and not repeat an offer that's already been given.

This improv is called 'Game Over'

• Person A plays the adult, Person B plays the gamer.

• Person A will read out the line printed in their first speech bubble: "It's time to finish your game."

• Person B will respond by reading out the line printed in their first speech bubble: "No, I..."

   NOTE: The dots in the speech bubbles indicate where the student needs to come up with their own response and make an offer.

• Person A will then respond by reading out their next speech bubble with an offer, and so on to the end of the round.

• Run through a couple of rounds with different students playing person A and B.

REFLECTION

• How did it feel to be person A and B?

• What other ways might they have responded?

• What differences did the class notice between saying 'No, I', 'Yes, but...', or 'Yes, and...'?

• What were the most believable scenarios?

• Can they think of other times when conversations like these have taken place?

Encourage students to write down ideas for positive ways they can have discussions with adults when they are being asked to stop playing a game.

ASK

• What strategies can you think of for achieving better outcomes with family and friends when gaming? Some examples:

   » setting time limits and sticking to them

   » discussing and agreeing with the other person how long to play and doing as agreed

   » negotiating with the other person if you're in the middle of a game

   » bringing the other person into your game world so they understand what you are doing and why.

Appendix C: Curriculum links

Victorian curriculum connections (Levels 5 and 6)

Critical and creative thinking curriculum

CODE	STRAND	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
VCCCTQ022	Questions and possibilities	Experiment with alternative ideas and actions by setting preconceptions to one side.

Drama curriculum

CODE	STRAND	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
VCADRD030	Drama practices	Develop skills and techniques of voice and movement to create character, mood and atmosphere and focus dramatic action.

English curriculum

CODE	MODE	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
VCELT314	Reading and viewing	**Year 5** Responding to literature: Use metalanguage to describe the effects of ideas, text structures and language features on particular audiences.
VCELY337	Speaking and listening	Interacting with others: Clarify understanding of content as it unfolds in formal and informal situations, connecting ideas to students' own experience, and present and justify a point of view or recount an experience using interaction skills.
VCELA339	Reading and viewing	**Year 6** Text structure and organisation: Understand how authors often innovate on text structures and play with language features to achieve particular aesthetic, humorous and persuasive purposes and effects.
VCELY366	Speaking and listening	Interacting with others: Participate in and contribute to discussions, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions, and use interaction skills, varying conventions of spoken interactions according to group size, formality of interaction and needs and expertise of the audience.

Ethical capability curriculum

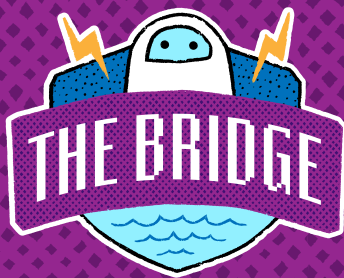| CODE	STRAND	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
VCECU009	Understanding concepts	Examine the contested meaning of concepts including truth and happiness and the extent to which these concepts are and should be valued.

Personal and social capability curriculum

CODE	STRAND	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
VCPSCSE025	Self-awareness and management	Explore the links between their emotions and their behaviour.

Visual arts curriculum

CODE	STRAND	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
VCAVAV030	Visual arts practices	Select and apply visual conventions, materials, techniques, technologies and processes specific to different art forms when making artworks.

Health and physical education

CODE	STRAND	CONTENT DESCRIPTION
VCHPEP108	Personal, social and community health	Plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing.
VCHPEP109		Practise skills to establish and manage relationships.
VCHPEP110		Examine the influence of emotional responses on behaviour, relationships and health and wellbeing.

MODULE 2:
Am I in control?