

# Don't take our **W<sub>4</sub> O<sub>1</sub> R<sub>1</sub> D<sub>2</sub>** for it.

**Researchers and educators agree: The SCRABBLE® game enhances learning**

**N**umerous studies have shown that play promotes learning in ways that are far superior to strictly traditional teaching methods, and the SCRABBLE® game has been field tested by educators with amazing success.

Dan Rea, Kelly Price Millican and Sandy White Watson published in the *Middle School Journal* their research in an article titled “The Serious Benefits of Fun in the Classroom.” They wrote, “In today’s information age, the ability and willingness to explore, discover, analyze and evaluate information is far more useful than merely memorizing facts. Serious play helps build creative and critical thinkers at the middle school level.”

Stressed was the importance of, “a flexible balance of serious purpose and playful interest in learning. On the fun side, teachers provide opportunities for students to experience playful challenges (Rea 1999). On the serious side, teachers structure and guide these challenging experiences so that students gain mastery of valuable skills.” The researchers went on to say, “Fun is not merely for fun’s sake, but for serious intellectual benefits (Rea 1999).”

*“Fun is not merely  
for fun’s sake,  
but for serious  
intellectual benefits.”*

(Rea 1999)



Ben Greenwood with the Runkle School SCRABBLE® Club.

Ben Greenwood, a teacher and educational consultant, conducted a study over a six-month period that charted middle school students’ progress after he incorporated the SCRABBLE® game into the language arts curriculum at the Runkle School in Brookline, Massachusetts. Data was collected through surveys taken before and after the period of study and observational data was also recorded. “The (SCRABBLE®) game

serves clear educational purposes in that it teaches students about a wide range of topics and engages them in discussions with their teachers, their families, and, most importantly, each other about issues that are not typically of much interest to elementary school children,” Greenwood concluded. “These topics include spelling accuracy, vocabulary building, the meaning and use of words, addition and multiplication math facts, mental math skills as well as confidence, dictionary skills, teamwork, enhanced spatial awareness and decision making skills.”

At the end of the six-month study one of the students wrote, “SCRABBLE® is different from Chutes and Ladders™ or Connect Four™ . . . while I was playing it, I learned the word FECKLESS which means worthless.” Another student wrote, “Just today I learned the word QUID. Yesterday I learned the word RAGTIME.” Greenwood asserts that these responses were typical of the participating students.

He also asserts that the math skills of students involved with the SCRABBLE® game improved. “In this area, students appeared to become much more confident in their abilities,” Greenwood wrote. “For example, in one classroom, four students had originally disagreed with the statement that ‘I am good at adding several numbers in my head’. By April, no students disagreed with that statement. A related measurement was provided by the question ‘I prefer to write down numbers before adding them together’. In one classroom the number of students *strongly* preferring to write down numbers before adding them dropped from 10 to 3.” More interesting numbers involving Greenwood’s study are included in the box above.

## THE NUMBERS

**After six months with the SCRABBLE® game used as part of Greenwood’s language arts curriculum:**

- **90%** of students agreed with the statement, “My spelling has improved while in the fifth grade.” 85% of those students related this improvement to playing the SCRABBLE® game.
- **90%** of students answered “yes” to the question, “Has playing SCRABBLE® made you want to increase your vocabulary?”
- **94%** of students answered “yes” to the question, “Have you ever seen a word and thought it would be a good word to remember to play in SCRABBLE®?”

Rea, D. (1999). Serious Fun in Social Studies for Middle Schoolers. *Social Education*, 63(5), M2-M5 (Middle Level Learning Supplement).



NATIONAL  
**SCRABBLE**  
ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 700 403 FRONT STREET GREENPORT NY 11944  
(631) 477-0033 • FAX (631) 477-0294  
school@scrabble-assoc.com • www.scrabble-assoc.com/school