Appendix A

Board Game Recommendations

Recommended board games for libraries from Scott Nicholson (Case Study 1)

The following games are good examples of modern board games that are relatively simple to learn that would be good additions to a library. Not all of these games have all of the aspects listed in Case Study 1, but they are all more immersive gaming experiences than traditional games. Some of them are card games or dice games, but they are grouped into the larger concept of board games. The first seven games are samples of the variety of "family strategy" board games, and the final three are other types of games.

No Thanks! (Z-Man Games, 3–5 players, age 8 and up, $10.00)

No Thanks! is an easy-to-learn card game for three to five players. Cards have the numbers 3 through 35, and nine of them are randomly removed before play begins. Each player starts with eleven chips, and each chip he or she has at the end of the game is worth one point. The top card is revealed, and each player will take a turn, to either give up one chip or take the card along with all of the chips other players have given up, so players have to balance the good points from chips with the bad points from cards. Cards are worth negative points equal to the value of the card, but if a player gets cards that are in sequence, only the lowest number of the sequence counts against the player. At the end of the game, the players count their chips and subtract their cards and the player with the best score wins.

Incan Gold (Sunriver Games, 3–8 players, age 8 and up, $19.95)

In *Incan Gold*, three to eight players delve into caves to bring back treasures, but many hazards lie in wait to end a player's adventure. There are fifteen treasure cards and fifteen hazard cards of five different types. A card is flipped, and if it is treasure, players divide the treasure evenly, leaving any remainder on the card. Players can then choose to continue their journey or to go back to the camp, picking up the leftovers and banking their winnings. The remaining players reveal the next card and divide the spoils. If two matching hazard cards are revealed, then the adventure ends and all players not safely at camp lose their treasures. Cards are then reshuffled after removing the card that ended the mission, and a new adventure continues. After five journeys, the player with the most treasure wins.

Blokus (Educational Insights, 2–4 players, age 5 and up, $29.99)

This colorful game is best for two or four players. Players have pieces that are combinations of one to five square tiles in various configurations. On a turn, the player puts a piece on a grid starting from one corner. Future pieces must touch a player's previous pieces by a corner, but cannot share an entire side with their previous pieces. Players continue to play pieces until no player has any moves remaining, and the player who has gotten rid of the most of their tiles is the winner. (Note: This is a game with "player elimination," but since a typical game lasts less than twenty minutes, an eliminated player doesn't have long to wait.)

10 Days in the U.S.A. (Out of the Box Games, 2–4 players, age 10 and up, $24.99)

This is one of a series of geographical games (with other games in Africa, Asia, and Europe) that were not designed as educational experiences, but certainly will teach players about the layout of states and countries along the way. Players have a rack with ten cards, each showing a state, country, or transport. Players will take one of three face-up cards and replace one of the cards from their rack with the drawn card with the goal of putting states or countries that share a border next to each other in the rack. Transports like airplanes can allow a route to jump across the board before continuing. The winner is the first player to make a route such that he or she can start with the first card and can trace a connected path using each of the ten cards.

Zooloretto (Rio Grande Games, 2–5 players, age 8 and up, $44.95)

In this game, two to five players are collecting and breeding animals for their zoos. Players start with three pens, each of which can hold a single type of animal. Players draw a random tile, which will be an animal, money, or a food stand. After drawing, the player will place the tile on one of several trucks. Instead of drawing a tile, the player may take a truck and the tiles on the truck. Tiles that a player cannot accommodate in their pens will go into the player's barn for later use or sale to others. At the end of the game, players get points for their animals with bonuses for full pens and lose points for animals still in their barns.

Ticket to Ride (Days of Wonder, 2–5 players, age 8 and up, $40.00)

Ticket to Ride is commonly recognized as one of the best "gateway games" for players new to modern board games. Players have secret missions to connect pairs of cities on a map of North America. Cities on the board are connected by paths of a single color of varying lengths. Players select cards making sets of the same color and can play a set of cards to claim a route for their exclusive use. As the game develops, players get more secret routes to complete, but as more routes are claimed, it becomes more challenging for players to connect their cities.

Settlers of Catan (Mayfair, 2–4 players, age 12 and up, $42.00)

Settlers of Catan was the first game from Germany that became popular in the United States in the 1990s. Players are settling a new island by collecting resources, trading with each other, and building roads, towns, cities, and developments. Players get victory points for buildings and some developments and are trying to be the first person to reach ten victory points.

Heroscape (Milton Bradley, 2+ players, 8 and up, $44.95)

Heroscape is different from the other games on the list, and although it is more of a pure American game, it would be a great addition for a library program. Players take control of a set of troops from various time periods and fight over objectives. The miniatures that represent troops are colorful and detailed, and the game comes with many customizable three-dimensional stacking terrain tiles. Once the game is set up, it is eye-catching and is also not a complex game to play. A Heroscape set up in the middle of a library would certainly draw attention and excitement to a gaming program.

Wits and Wagers (North Star Games, 3–21 players, age 10 and up, $29.99)

Party games have also evolved over the last decade. The "roll-and-move and answer questions" game format established by Trivial Pursuit has been replaced with more dynamic ways of interacting. In Wits and Wagers, players are given a question with a numerical answer. All players write down a guess, and the guesses are then ranked from low to high. Players then wager on which guess is the closest without going over, and wagers placed on the more extreme guesses pay out at a higher rate. Players can do well by either knowing the answer, knowing who at the table should know the answer, or playing the numerical spread between guesses and the odds.

Tumblin' Dice (Nash Games, 2–4 players, age 8 and up, $59.99)

This admittedly noisy game would be a fun addition to a library and is a great example of a game that draws in players of many ages. In this game, players flick dice off a platform. The dice rattle down several stepped board areas and hopefully come to a stop before going off the board. The dice are worth the number showing times a multiplier, based upon how far down they went before stopping. Tumblin' Dice looks simple but is a lot of fun.

Games purchased by Christopher Harris for the BOCES program (Case Study 2)

Carccassone

Focuses on spatial awareness and long-term planning as students lay tiles to complete cities, roads, and farms.

Enchanted Forest

A fairy tale–based memorization game where young students travel around a board finding Cinderella's slipper and Rapunzel's tower so they can reveal them for the king.

Incan Gold

Storytelling from the narrator drives this game of risk management as each student has to decide whether to go forward to look for more treasure or turn back to keep what they have safe.

Lost Cities

Another game of risk management, but for two players and focused more on math as players try to decide if they will be able to collect enough points to offset the initial twenty points of risk for starting an expedition.

Max

A cooperative game for very young students that requires conversation and collaboration as players work to save woodland creatures from Max the cat.

Numbers League

This game is pure math wrapped up in a whole lot of fun as players work to build mismatched heros, then add and multiply their values to catch numbered villains.

Quiddler

In this word-building game, students end up looking at their hand of letter cards, thinking about every word in their vocabularies and trying to come up with the longest word or the most short words.

Settlers of Catan

Geography, economics, planning, and resource management are all present in this intense game of building and connecting cities.

Skallywaggs

Though a crazy pirate game on the surface, this game forces students to read and interact with complex rules that change based on the cards in play.

Ticket to Ride

Students are having fun building train routes across the country, but teachers and librarians know they are learning geography, planning, and resource management.