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Game-based learning is topic at Tulsa library event

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Matthew Winner: "There are children out there that are lost, and we can save them by figuring out what they're into and being into it as well," says the co-author of "Teach Math With the Wii: Engage Your K-7 Students Through Gaming Technology. He is presenting his "Be The Hero" program in Tulsa this week.

Posted: Sunday, April 13, 2014 12:00 am | Updated: 6:37 am, Sun Apr 13, 2014.

By NOUR HABIB World Staff Writer | **0 comments**

To be heroes to the students they teach, educators have to go outside their comfort zones to connect with kids.

That will be Matthew Winner's message Wednesday when he presents his "Be The Hero" program at Hardesty Regional Library.

Winner, a Maryland school librarian who co-wrote the book "Teach Math With the Wii: Engage Your K-7 Students Through Gaming Technology," will talk to teachers, librarians, homeschool parents and other educators about game-based learning during the event.

"There are children out there that are lost, and we can save them by figuring out what they're into and being into it as well," Winner said in a phone interview with the Tulsa World.

Winner began experimenting with game-based learning when his school bought a couple of Wiis for teachers to use.

"Gaming is a language that I speak," he said.

"So it makes a lot of sense to bring video games into my instruction."

Winner said that a lot of Wii games can be used to teach various math concepts by making data meaningful and allowing numbers to be used in a conversational way.

For example, teachers can have a conversation about math simply by talking about elapsed time during a game or the difference in how fast each student completed a certain level.

"We're not trying to say use this tool to teach math, but use it to master math standards," he

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said.

Winner will also talk about integrating other technology into instruction, such as the variety of uses for the videoconferencing software Skype.

Some people have a tendency to focus on the negative aspects of technology, Winner said. But to be a hero, educators should try to find positive ways to use what is available.

"The more we can emphasize the human connection, the better," he said.

Winner started a blog called The Busy Librarian about five years ago. He uses it to share resources with other teachers and librarians, as well as to help them network. He recently started a podcast on the blog called "Let's Get Busy," in which he interviews people who are in some way connected to children's literature.

Winner says he hopes to show people that none of this work has to be complicated, and that it's easy to connect with others and offer the best you can to the students.

"It's about being the change you want to see," he said.

Winner has received recognition for his work, including being named a White House Champion of Change and a 2013 Library Journal Mover and Shaker.

The program will be held from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Wednesday The program is free, but registration is required at tulsalibrary.org/BetheHero

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'Be The Hero'

What: A presentation about game-based learning for teachers, librarians, homeschool parents and other educators

Who: Matthew Winner of The Busy Librarian blog and co-author of the book "Teach Math With the Wii: Engage Your K-7 Students Through Gaming Technology."

When: 4:30-6 p.m. Wednesday

Where: Connor's Cove at Hardesty Regional Library, 8316 E. 93rd St.

Cost: Free

Registration: tulsalibrary.org/BetheHero

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