

## How can I use Big Huge Labs in the Classroom?



*"I teach educators how to use digital images in their classroom. Your site is one of my favorites to share with my teachers. We create posters, trading cards of Explorers, mosaics, and magazine covers. My teachers love to use your product." – Susan, Technology Trainer*

### BigHugeLabs and Education

Are you using BigHugeLabs in the classroom? Sign up for a free Educator account and get the following benefits:

- ✓ Pre-register your students so they can sign in **without requiring an email address.**
- ✓ **View and download** content created by your students.
- ✓ Use the site **advertising-free.**
- ✓ **Ready to print ID cards** for your students

BigHugeLabs is proud to assist you with your education goals.

#### To enroll:

1. [Create a free account or sign in.](#) (Registering with your school email address isn't required but it does speed up the approval process.)
2. Return here to scan and upload proof of current educator status. This can be a scan of your official school identification or similar document.

Oh! You know what's fun? Have a friend take a photo of you *holding* your ID. (Trust me, it's more fun than it sounds like it would be.)

### MORE THAN JUST FUN

There are endless possibilities of these online tools for developing critical thinking skills and creativity.

The following examples are from Brenda Dyck is a sessional instructor at the University of Alberta, in Edmonton, Alberta (Canada).

Using the [Magazine Cover](#) application from Big Huge Labs as a context, I created an assessment activity for the university pre-service teachers I teach. For the assignment, they were required to create a magazine cover demonstrating their understanding of key components of Alberta's new *Social Studies Program of Studies*. Everything included on the magazine cover (main title, subtitles, background image, article titles) had to reflect what students understood about the key contents of that important curriculum document.

More than just a fun thing to do, the use of Big Huge Lab's magazine cover tool necessitated my students merging the left and right sides of the brain by converting what they knew about the *Program of Studies* into a graphic representation (a magazine cover). It also required them to think symbolically and to make use of their ability to communicate information in a visual format.

Once created, I asked the students to copy/paste the magazine cover into a Word document, and then, using the Auto shape feature, add callouts that justified their use of symbols, images, colour, image, and text. The assignment results the students handed in convinced me that the mash up tools found on the Big Huge Labs web site could serve as the jumping-off point for some very meaty thinking opportunities!

[Example Link](#)

The Magazine Cover tool also could be used to house an assignment description for a student assignment.

[Example Link](#)

## FLASHING LIGHTS

The teachers in Northern Alberta identified a number of other ways those tools could be used as a technology mind tool to support learning. Below are a few of their suggestions (and a few examples).

### [Trading Cards](#)

In Grade 6 science, students study Trees and Forests. To help students apply what they are learning about the characteristics that distinguish deciduous from coniferous trees, each student could use the Trading Card application to create four trading cards that represent different types of trees and then trade with one another until they each have two coniferous trees and two deciduous trees in their decks.

Lee Brentnell, a high school teacher from Grande Prairie, Alberta, created a Grade 11 social studies assignment based on key people, battles, and events from World War I. Exploring the question "Was WWI a gamble?," groups of students would use the Trading Cards application to create a deck of playing cards that ranked thirteen items (ex: assassination at Sarajevo, Armenian Genocide, Vimy Ridge, Battle of Passchendale, and so on) in order of importance from high (Ace) to low (2). Students would include on each playing card, a relevant image and a short explanation about the event, person, or battle. As a culminating activity, students might use the decks to play five rounds of poker and then choose one of the winning hands to write a written response explaining how the cards in the winning hand were related.

[Lesson Link](#)

Other uses for trading cards include:

- **Book Reviews** – find a photo that expresses your feelings about a book you've read. Write a few lines about what the book meant to you.
- **Student book reports** - Use the 2-sided [Character Trading Card generator](#) from the ReadWriteThink to create a summary of the book, notes about the characters, plot and more. ([sample card](#))
- **"5 facts" reports** – Find a photo or graphic of a topic. List 5 facts about that topic. Expand this to a podcast of the '5 facts' (that idea from the [Beverly \(MI\) Elementary School Podcasts](#)) and use the trading card to illustrate the blog/web/wiki page listing the podcasts.
- **Super Powers Cards** – Have students create avatars for the trading card. And then create names and identities for themselves. Perhaps super powers that relate to things they enjoy doing? Fun "get to know you" cards to figure out who's who.
- **Parent's Night** – Use those same mysterious avatar cards to post next to student projects on parent's nights. See if the parents can find their child's work.

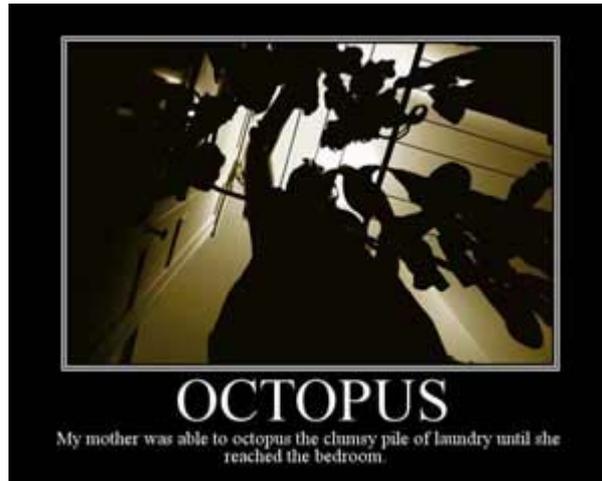
- **Trading Cards for Parents** – Have students create trading cards about their parents for parent’s night.
- **State/country reports** – Photos, map, flags, etc of their topic. List most important info about their state/country in the text section.
- **Review Cards** – Have students create foreign language/vocabulary review cards to share. Picture of an object and the words/definitions/meaning.
- **Faculty trading cards** – Teachers could create their own super hero trading cards to give to students – with information about their class or maybe their own “super-hero” traits!
- **Research skills trading cards** – Savvy Searcher, Commander of Databases, and other such silly things. Given to students as master various research skills. Collect a set, collect a prize?
- **Solar System trading cards** – Use photos of planets, etc. from NASA to create cards. Have student’s list facts, but not the name of the object. Others have to guess what it is. More ideas, photos and an online game available at the [Solar Trading Cards System](#) web page.
- **Fact or Fiction** – Each student creates a card with their photo or avatar and lists 2 facts about themselves and one false statement. Use this as a get-to-know-you activity. This idea from [Experiments in Technology](#). See that post for a cool time capsule idea.

### Motivator Poster

One Division One teacher saw great potential in the Motivational Poster application. She proposed using that tool to have lower elementary students identify powerful verbs. The tool also would be an excellent way to have foreign-language and English-language students explore new vocabulary.



Teaching students to create their own verbs from other words can be an interesting way to explore language. In Grace Fleming’s article about [powerful verbs](#), one of Fleming’s new verb examples caught my attention and gave me a nudge to illustrate it with the Motivator Poster tool. Instead of using the more conventional “My mother was able to carry the giant laundry pile until she reached the bedroom,” I used Motivator to profile Fleming’s newly created verb, *octopus*: “My mother was able to *octopus* the clumsy pile of laundry until she reached the bedroom.”



### Movie Poster

Another teacher worked on a language arts project to accompany a book talk project. Students would use the movie poster application from Big Huge Labs to create a movie poster based on the novel they had used for their book talk assignment. The tool also could be used in conjunction with a creative writing assignment, in which students would use the Movie Poster application to create a poster that supported their narrative writing assignment.

**Note: When using Big Huge Lab, be sure to save your projects to your computer; the site will store projects for only a limited time.**