Wednesday, September 9th, 2020, noon
On-line

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Serious Play: Gamification as a Path to
Deepened Engagement with Historical
Thinking

Abstract. I will argue that Reacting to the Past™ games, together with more traditional
modes of teaching history, can transform how our students engage in historical thinking
and engage with other skills considered crucial to success and civic engagement in the
21st century. I will also review more generally the ways in which gamification, when
done well, can deepen engagement with learning.

A number of studies make the case that Reacting to the Past™ fosters the development of
skills that American Academy of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) has defined as
crucial for 21st century college graduates. I also argue that Reacting can foster the kind
of historical thinking called for in the American Historical Association’s (AHA) Tuning
Project which mandates that college-level history teaching engage students in historical
inquiry, research, and analysis; practice historical empathy; understand the complex
nature of the historical record; generate significant, open-ended questions about the
past; craft historical narrative and argument; and practice historical thinking, all skills
valuable in the 21st century workplace and crucial to meaningful civic engagement.