The Player's Guide to Hacking Games

Hacking: to break down or change the rules of a game in order to create a new outcome.

Have you ever adjusted a rule to a game in order to change the process? Maybe you prefer to double stack similar number cards in UNO. Or maybe you like to add a couple extra game pieces to Monopoly. Sometimes we hack because components of the game we want to play are missing. Sometimes we hack because we don't have enough players. No matter why you do it, a simple change (hack) can completely change the outcome of the game.

Hacking games is a key component of Game On! Philadelphia because it encourages you to think critically while reevaluating how you interact with a game. Plus, hacking a game is fun!

If you'd like to try hacking, here are a few guidelines:
- Learn the rules of a game. Spend some time playing that game and then change a rule. What happens to the game once you make a change?
- Invite friends to play the new game with you before the hack and after the hack - talk about the differences that you see in each iteration.

Here's an example of an easy to hack game:

Rock, Paper, Scissors, Dragon
1. The game is played where the players substitute the three elements of Rock, Paper and Scissors with representative hand signals.
2. These hand signals are delivered simultaneously by the players.
3. The outcome of play is determined by the following:
   i. Rock wins against Scissors
   ii. Scissors wins against Paper
   iii. Paper wins against Rock
4. **Time for a hack** - Add in Dragon: the losing player in each battle stands behind the winner and puts their hands on the shoulders of the winner. This creates a train, similar to a Chinese dragon, as the winner battles each other winner. Soon, the whole class will be behind the final winners who battle it out for the ultimate title of Rock, Paper, Scissors, Dragon!
5. Discuss how adding one new rule changed the make-up of the entire game.

Instead of hacking a pre-existing game, you can create your own game using found materials. **Found materials** refers to any sort of object that can be incorporated into a game - it does not have to be a traditional game piece. Possible objects could include: playing cards, dominoes, index cards, chess pieces, rocks, marbles, dice, game boards, feathers, straws, etc.

Create your own game using these materials. You can use the rules of an already existing game - such as tic-tac-toe - or create something entirely new. For a short video of a game created using found materials, visit the following link: https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0B_0lVMC0wihkLVdFMzJsMUZqdTg