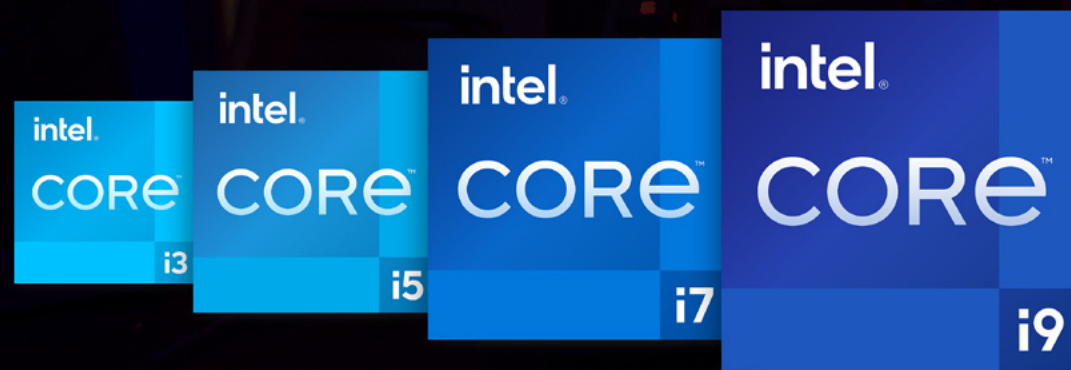


**Your #1 priority:**  
**Levelling the playing field  
for students with Esports**

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## About Marco Vigelini, Maker Camp CEO



Marco Vigelini is an education-technology expert. His company, Maker Camp, develops learning experiences with Minecraft, Roblox, Fortnite and The Sandbox for UNESCO sites, museums, brands and educational institutions. Maker Camp convey educational content to children, families and schools through gamification.

Marco is a celebrated speaker on education technology in Italy and abroad, and an advocate for using video games in cultural and educational contexts. He launched the first competitive video game league for high schools students in Italy, the Lega Scolastica esports.

Every student deserves a chance to feel like they belong in their school. But many won't participate in established clubs and teams if they feel disinterested or unskilled in those activities. Offering a variety of extra-curriculars can motivate them to engage with their peers and teachers. Marco Vigelini believes that esports are great for getting learners involved in extracurricular activities.

Lenovo interviewed Marco on this topic. Read on to discover how students develop invaluable skills and improve rapport with their teachers when they participate in esports at school.







## Esports at a glance

### How would you define esports?

Technically, esports refers to electronic competitions that take place as video games. For educators, esports can be a tool that allows them to connect with their students and develop important soft skills. For students, esports give them a way to connect with peers. It helps them experience a sense of belonging.

### How do you think the average person feels about esports?

Most adults are not familiar with the world of esports at all. It can be difficult for some grownups to understand what excites young people when it comes to technology.



Any tool that can support teaching, be it a video game, a robot, or a hands-on experience, can be useful if it makes sense to the teacher who decides to use it.



Students who are given the opportunity to play esports at school are often pleasantly surprised to find that their school and teachers understand them.

### What is the perception of esports in education? Are people typically skeptical, or are they open to the idea?

Teachers are often skeptical – playing esports is still a new phenomenon in their eyes. But, since most teachers want to understand their students' interests, they are prepared to give it a go.

Using esports in extracurricular contexts allows teachers to find the right balance and approach this new activity in their own time.







# Esports in education: developing vital skills

## How would you summarise the benefit of using esports in education?

There are so many positive aspects to it! I'd say the top benefits are: students are motivated to participate in school life, they have a sense of belonging when they're at school, they're challenged to develop their soft skills, they have continuous exposure to STEM disciplines.

## How do esports help pupils to learn?

Several studies have shown that students who get involved in extracurricular activities improve their academic performance. And this is true regardless of the activity offered – whether it is a drama class, a meeting for robotics enthusiasts, or watching historical films.

Playing esports can be an accessible and engaging activity for all students – including those who would otherwise not participate in extracurricular activities. Esports can help counteract a sense of isolation that students may feel and give them the push they need to get involved



Esports are a way for kids to feel that they finally have a place at school where they can express themselves.

in the school community. Gaming can draw kids in – it can serve as an entry point in school-participation, where activities like drama class, music group and so on, may not be enticing.

## Are there any specific learning-areas where you've seen esports be particularly effective?

Esports have been shown to help students develop both hard skills, like problem-solving in STEM, and soft skills, like the ability to collaborate. The sport is grounded in technology and provides a natural pathway students who want to pursue STEM disciplines or, perhaps, pursue careers related specifically to video games, like: web development, organization, legal advocacy, shoutcasting, and game analysis – to name but a few.

## Could you give a few of examples of how esports help pupils develop skills?

Let's look at what typically happens when a school starts an esports club. After they join, students set out to promote their school team. Some students will put their artistic skills to work to create the team's logo and motto, while others will post about their team on social channels. Many students create a website for rankings and calendars of matches. It's common for a group of students to be charge of merchandising and raising funds to support their team. They may also set up streaming channels – complete with network setup and content.

During competitions, a whole host of other skills come in to play as well. Strategic planning, leadership, quick decision-making, and effective communication are all honed during each game session. Students are challenged to change tactics to improve or maintain results. And to do so quickly, with effective communication and flexibility.



You cannot teach collaboration merely by speaking about it. You can't simply say "collaborate, please" or "today we're going to learn how to collaborate". Students need more than abstract explanations and vague terms. Esports truly stimulate skills by giving students a chance to develop them in real life.

## How can esports help with students' future employability?

In addition to the various soft skills I mention earlier, students can develop technical skills like game design in Unity, Unreal Engine, Godot, and The Sandbox. Other than that, there are various sectors that are relevant to esports in some way: web developing, network engineering, content creation, and video editing are just a few of the options that come to mind.





## Esports in education: changing the game for teachers

### You recently launched the first esports championship for learners in Italy. What did educators think of it?

The first esports championship for high schools in Italy, Lega Scolastica Esports (LSE), was a success. I encouraged educators to get a team of their students together and compete. I'm an advocate for esports in education and hopefully educators recognise that I speak about the topic from a position of technical-knowhow and experience. I'm happy to say that several teams rose to the challenge and their teachers told me afterward that the experience exceeded their highest expectations.

### What advice would you give schools looking to form esports teams?

I'd say schools should start by actively involving a small number of teachers initially. And to then bring other members of staff and the students' families on board as well.

### What kind of technology and equipment should a school interested in esports be aware of?

Having up-to-date PCs, local networks, and reliable internet connections are crucial. Any modern PC will do. A decent graphics card will be required for some video games. I'd say the PCs will be worked hardest during self-paced lessons on Unreal Engine, Twinmotion or Unity.

### What are the biggest benefits of using esports to teach?

I don't think esports are necessarily tools for teaching in a typical setting. Rather, they are a hook, an access point. They engage students. They create an opportunity for teacher and student to understand one another.

After the experience they had with LSE, several teachers said that they were "closer to" and "more understood by" their students. According to teachers, students participated better in lessons after the LSE than they did before it.

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It's as though the teacher proposing an esports activity broke down a wall of resistance that had existed between them and their students.



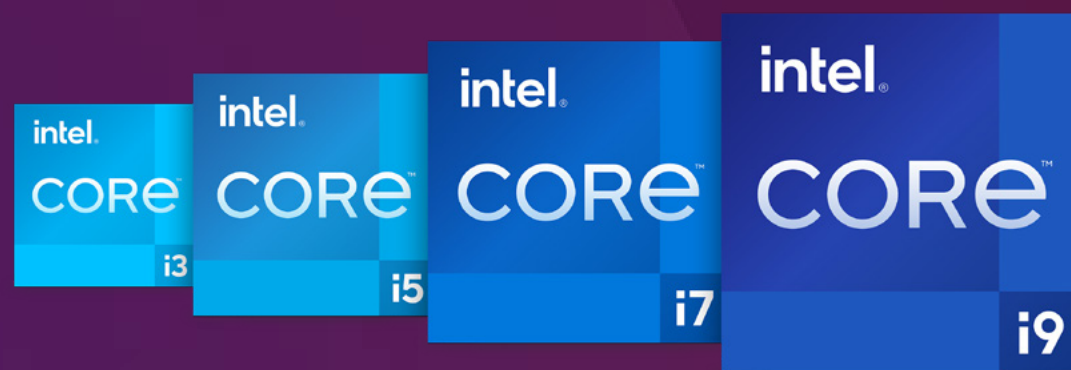


# Let the games begin: learn more about esports technology for your school

At Lenovo, we are committed to creating education technology that opens the door to a brighter future for students of all walks of life. We can't thank Marco enough for sharing his insight on esports in schools as a game-changing approach to education.

Interested in implementing esports at your school? Head over to TechToday to learn more about the technology you can use to inspire your students to participate fully in their school communities.

Please visit [Lenovo Tech Today](#)



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