

Cover Story ...

## Elementeo: the first global chemistry board game

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**T**he

coming few days will hold witness to a potential landmark in science popularization—desperately sought by scientists yet ever-so distant in actuality. Leading the way is fourteen year old Anshul Samar, CEO and Founder, Alchemist Empire Inc. Samar has developed the first ever board game based on chemistry with the aim to combine fun and learning, as his website claims, in one grand concoction.

At a first glance, Elementeo looks like any other board game, replete with dragons, witches and dialogues that one would come across in the fantasy world. The only difference being that all this is choreographed in an exquisite manner to make chemistry a lot more interesting than it turns out to be in many classrooms across the globe.

The game involves element cards that act according to their characteristic chemical properties, compound cards that react to destroy the opponent's cards; and alchemy cards that go chemically berserk, causing everything from nuclear fusion to acid rain. These are the weapons employed by players across a 5X5 chemical battlefield in order to reduce the opponent's electrons to zero. While the Copper conductor

do we tell kids why they need to know something. Many times, we throw at kids complex sounding words and long chemical formulas without really showing them the



cool and excited explanation behind it'.

Apart from the pure originality of the idea that prompts one to think why such an idea didn't strike anyone earlier, Elementeo stands out in its unabashed use of eye-catching images along with accurate scientific details of the chemical species involved. Science textbooks have often been guilty of preferring the pen to the brush. Samar seems to have gone through enough of this himself so as to not repeat this



shocks the adjacent cards back into the deck, Milk of Magnesia destroys all acids on the battlefield and when an army is low on energy, one simply needs to deal the Nuclear Fusion card and BANG... the power's increased by a factor of two!

mistake. The few images that are open to public viewing are appropriate to the chemical functions of the species they represent, and are sure to register in the minds of the players.

The other striking aspect of Elementeo is its layman-friendly nature. The game introduces elements and compounds rather innovatively (for e.g. Oxygen: life giver, Sodium dragon and Copper Conductor) without compromising on their scientific details. The language is



lucid and chemistry no longer seems the domain of intellectuals and geeks. From an arbit idea that struck Samar while in fourth grade to the impending worldwide launch of 5,000 games (including 50 games booked by the American Chemical Society), the idea of combining fun and learning surely holds promise. It is yet to be seen whether Elementeo can strike some much-needed chemistry between science and people.



Happy gaming, Happy learning!