

Learning at the LRC Issue 3: November 2011

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Purposefully Designed Play

By Jennifer Garcia

I had the privilege of attending the K-12 Online Conference this week, the focus of which was **Purposeful Play**. Play with a purpose is an crucial part of any education. Our 21st century learners need experiences that will help them become visionaries and risk takers, collaborative innovators and creators who are able to anticipate and solve complex problems. Individuals with these skills will be successful, and purposeful play is a powerful way to get them there.

What is the special lure that games hold for students? There's more than one answer to this, but possibly one of the main reasons is that through gaming students are able to accomplish feats they can't attempt in real life. They can be heroes, builders, movers and shakers, create alliances, win territory and solve huge problems unrestricted by age, the human condition or basic physics. This type of gaming fosters strategy building, critical and lateral thinking, giving students a sense of purpose and pushing their imaginations.

The ABC recognizes the power of play and with this in mind the LRC has embarked on a few of special projects. Computer gaming, while restricted during school hours due to access concerns, is allowed and encouraged once classes are out and more machines are available.

The LRC has always supported the playing of strategic, problem solving games by students and continues to do so. There is a listing of games that are "LRC approved" on display for students at all times and students are encouraged to recommend games that they feel fall into this category.

Many of our students have recently fallen in love with a game that is by no means new, but one they find very exciting-Minecraft. a game which encourages creativity and strategy. We have purchased Minecraft in order to set it up at school for students access. Currently most students play the free version which limits their options and some have resorted to downloading a "Cracked" version at home, something which we hope to discourage through our little trial.

The LRC will also run an extra curricular in CAL two which focuses on gaming involving quests and team work in the Massive Multiplayer Online Game (MMOG) World of Warcraft. This club will allow students access to the game, enable them to go on quests and explore the rich lore entwined in the game.

Gaming however is not the only focus of the club. Alongside the game, students will be reading a graphic novel which also involves elements of good, bad, quests, teamwork and lore. Each week they will read two more chapters, play WoW with a certain task in mind, reflect focusing on elements of their readings and the game and drawing parallels between the two whenever possible in a blog created just for this purpose.



The Animation Club

By Rodrigo Alfaro

The Animation Club had an eventful month, with much larger groups attending on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students have been experimenting with different types of animation, especially pixilation (sequential pictures), for practice with timing in animation. They've even studied the movement of a person walking, by photographing a walk cycle with a wooden artist's dummy doll.

The younger students also had their first chance to try animation exercises in which movement in animation is conveyed. They did this by studying and drawing the movement of a bouncing ball, a sack of flour and a feather; falling to the ground. This exercise is usually the first one any serious animation student has to undertake, because it's easy to understand how these items would react if we were to watch them falling.

Understanding these three types of motion in animation is essential to convey the idea of mass and weight. Bouncing objects will bounce at least twice before coming to rest. Heavy objects will fall straight to the ground with no bouncing and very light objects will flutter and encounter wind resistance, therefore falling much slower. As they explore these concepts students also began to discover some other basic animation principles, like squashing, stretching and anticipation.

The main goal behind these visual exercises is to familiarize students with the animation software we use in school, as well as to demystify the concept of animation as something complicated and confusing. With enough time and practice, they will feel confident enough about their own animations, and be ready to undertake small personal projects, whether for school or for their personal film making experience.

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