

Title of Session: Gaming: It's not just for geeks anymore!

Moderator: Debra Sprague

Title of File: gamingnotforgeeks

Date: July 25, 2007

Room: After School Online

CelesteR: Was there a pre-session literature for this one?

BJB2 smiles. No, Celeste

DebraSp: No, we are going to talk about gaming and I plan to share some resources.

CelesteR: Thanks!

CelesteR: Okay! I just want to learn! I became frustrated with all the side talk.

DebraSp: Hopefully, we can keep the side talk to a minimum.

DebraSp: I have lots of experience doing this, but not with such a large crowd.

BJB2: Welcome to Gaming: It's not just for Geeks Anymore. Our event leader is Debra Sprague

ShayneTr: We'll try to be respectful and let you talk, Debra :)

SherylM: Yes

BJB2 turns the floor over to Deb to set the guidelines for the discussion

DebraSp: Thank you.

CarlosJ: lots of people are interested in this subject

DebraSp smiles

BJB2 waits quietly while Deb types

DorethiaM: my son is a professional gamer and has his own website. he is 33 years old, so you are never too old. How do I convince him to channel his knowledge toward education.

DavidWek . o O (good question)

DebraSp: Hello, Everyone, and welcome.

CarlosJ: it seems like he has a job, and there is money to be made in professional gaming, I'd say let him do it

DebraSp: I teach a course on gaming and robotics at my university so BJ asked me to do this session.

BJB2 turns the floor over to Deb to set the guidelines for the discussion. Please hold questions until she asks for them

DebraSp: My plan is to discuss broadly some of the research on gaming and point you to some good resources.

DebraSp: I then will show you some online resources for free games that can be used in education.

DebraSp: Some you may be familiar with and some you may not.

DebraSp: I know some of you maybe gamers and play online games such as World of Warcraft.

DebraSp: I am afraid I don't have time to do that as I am a single parent of a two-year old, so feel free to add your experiences into the discussion.

DebraSp: Gaming has been around for a long time and over the years there has been much interest and discussion about its use in education.

DebraSp: I worked in my Masters and PhD in the late 80's, early 90's and took courses dealing with simulations and gaming.

CelesteR: World of Warcraft...How can I peel my 12-year old from the screen? He is addicted to it.

DebraSp: There has been an upsurge in interest mainly due to online gaming adventures and the increase in video games in homes (X-BOX, Playstation, etc.)

DorethiaM: doesn't make much money. he was writing video game strategy guides, but figured out that there are strategies online. I share this with my students. How do I motivate students in this gaming generation that it is positive.

DebraSp: The research is showing gaming is highly addictive and yet also serves as a way to connect with other people since it is no longer and isolated activity.

CarlosJ: I agree with that last statement

DebraSp: People are using these online games to connect to love ones who are miles away, especially for families with soldiers in Iraq.

ShayneTr: How do they do that?

DebraSp: They connect through sites such as WoW and while playing the game they have side bar chats and catch up with what is happening.

SherylM: Debra, do you think we are seeing an updated, online iteration or renaissance of educational games like we did with the games created by the Minnesota Educational Computer Consortium and Microsoft products like Explorapedia?

CarlosJ: Steam is a site that's becoming more popular

DebraSp: I do think we are seeing an upsurge as there are more games being developed for use in schools than in the past, especially online.

DebraSp: However, you need to be critical to determine if the game is reaching higher order thinking skills or is just drill-and-kill.

DebraSp: John Rice developed a rubric for assessing higher-order thinking skills in games. This was published in "Assessing Higher Order Thinking in Video Games" by Rice, Journal of Technology and Teacher Education, 15, (1).

RaylaS: do special Ed students use any kind of gaming in their classrooms??

DebraSp: This is an excellent rubric for looking at the educational value in video games.

MaryGst5: I agree that the game should encourage higher level critical thinking.

DebraSp: There are games available for people with special needs, it depends on the learning you want to accomplish.

RaylaS: I would also agree

RaylaS: do many school use them?

DebraSp: I use to have a good simulation for teaching how to move around in a wheelchair. I downloaded it off of a site and used it in my Diversity course.

RaylaS: that's cool

DebraSp: Few schools use games and those that do call them by a different name (usually simulations).

MaryGst5: That sounds good

DebraSp: Let me give you the title of a few books that might interest you.

DebraSp: Digital Gameplay: Essays on the Nexus of Game and Gamer – Edited by Nate Garrelts – Publisher: McFarland & Company, Inc.

DebraSp: This is geared more towards gamers than education. It discusses several commercial games and what we are learning about gaming by engaging in these. Worth looking at for anyone interested in gaming.

DebraSp: Electric Worlds in the Classroom: Teaching and Learning with Role-based Computer Games by Slator and Associates – Publisher: Teachers College Press

DebraSp: This book is written by developers of multi-user role-playing games. The difference is that these are all designed for teaching content and can be used in the schools. Although they say the games are designed for K-12, most of the examples given are Middle and High school level.

DebraSp: Games and Simulations in Online Learning: Research and Development Frameworks – Edited by Gibson, Aldrich, and Prensky

DavidWek: Debra, that one has GOT to be boring, right?

DavidWek . o O ("...Research and Development Frameworks"?)

DebraSp: This is a fairly new book, just out. It is written by academics, but had some good information in it.

DavidWek grins

DebraSp: This may seem more boring than the others, but it is edited by Clark Aldrich and Mark Prensky, two leaders in the gaming field.

DebraSp: The chapters are short, but anyone interested in research should look at this one.

DavidWek smiles

DebraSp: There are lots of others out there, by Pensky, Aldrich, and John Gee. These are the key writers at this time. They talk about the benefits of using games in education.

DorethiaM: I have seen Mark Prensky in person and he is right on the mark.

DebraSp: Yes. He does talk about this generation of learners and ways to reach them, through technology in general and gaming specifically.

DebraSp: I agree with much of what he says.

DebraSp: Would you like to see some free games?

RaylaS: sure

BarbSa: yes

DeidraM: yes

CelesteR: YES!

HollyWe : yes

DoloresG: you bet

KimFl: yes :)

CarlosJ: oh yeah

MaryGst5: YES

DorethiaM: When I was in 8th grade back in the mid 20th century, Bell labs predicted this and we all said Wow. Now I see this come to fruition in my lifetime.

SherylM: I'm with you.

DebraSp: Ok! These are some of the games/sites I use in my gaming course.

DeidraM: what is the name of the course you teach?

SusanR . o O (hopes Debra will give her thoughts about SecondLife at some point within the hour)

DebraSp: I hope they are all working today. They were last night when I tried them. I will give you the opportunity to bookmark the site.

DebraSp: For those interested in my course you can see the syllabus at <http://mason.gmu.edu/~dspragu1/edit742.html>

DebraSp: Tabula Digita – a 3d Immersive Algebra video game, seen at NECC 2007 www.tabuladigita.com

DebraSp: Tabula Digital is a role-playing game that teaches Algebra concepts. They had students playing it at NECC 2007.

DebraSp: Has anyone used it with their students?

DeE: nope

RaylaS: I have never heard of them before

DebraSp: Good, always nice to get new information.

SherylM: yes

DebraSp: The next one some of you may be familiar with.

DebraSp: Food Force: put out by the United Nations to teach about the world hunger.
<http://www.food-force.com/>

MichaelM: You may also want to look at <http://education.jlab.org/million/index.html>

CarlosJ: I've played food force it's interesting

DorethiaM: WOW :}

KarenTate: awesome!

BarbSa: Interest what is the reading level

RaylaS: I can't wait to go and check them out when I get home

DeidraM: I've never heard of any of these. Keep them coming. Are there any ELA (English Lit) related games?

DebraSp: Food Force is a free download. It takes you through six missions that you need to complete. There is no real violence, but you may be confronted by armed gunmen who want the supplies. You need to talk yourself out of the situation.

DebraSp: Thanks for the link, Michael.

RitaSo: Would elementary students understand it

MichaelM: yw

DebraSp: Elementary students may not fully understand it, but they will enjoy playing the game.

RitaSo: Yes games are their life

RitaSo: I'll try it

DebraSp: The next one will overlap with the previous session. I do not know if this was shared. I use it in my Diversity course.

DebraSp: Real Lives – “a unique, interactive life sim that enables you to live one of billions of lives in any country in the world.”

DebraSp: <http://www.educationalsimulations.com/>

CelesteR: Deidra, I feel they are all English-related...Language Arts

DebraSp: This has a free trail version download although you can purchase the complete program.

DebraSp: This is text based only and may not be appropriate for all students. It is best with high school and college age students.

DorethiaM: Kinda on the line of the SIM series.

RitaSo: Might be good for our parents at a Home and

DorethiaM: I am going to talk to my son about expanding his website to the educational games.

DavidWek: good luck, Dorethia

RaylaS: it can't hurt

DebraSp: Because this program has you living a life of another person from another country you are given questions regarding dating and marriage (including the possibility of dating someone from your own gender) and there are health issues related to Aids and STDs

DavidWek . o O (role-playing)

DorethiaM: He thinks games are for fun. You think he would realize that the market is virtually endless

DebraSp: I am not sure how much of these are bugs within the free download and how much occur in the complete program.

DebraSp: This one my students looked at, but we did not get to play it for any length of time.

DebraSp: Human age simulation game / free virtual management game where you adopt a human being and help him or her through various ages of mankind, from prehistory to the 21st century, from learning how to use a club to your driver's license.

DebraSp: <http://www.human-age.com/?Prov=1>

DebraSp: And for all those Science people in the audience...Online emergency room simulator - <http://www.ersim.com/main.html>

DebraSp: Take the training course before trying to be an emergency room doctor. Your patient has a better chance of living.

CarlosJ: know of any astronomical simulators?

BarbSa: human age would be great for both history, reading and cultural diversity

DebraSp: True, Barb. When I have time to explore it I might add it to my Diversity course.

RitaSo: I might be able to use this. Do you play individually or as a team?

DebraSp: Most of these are individual games.

RaylaS: I'm checking out some of these links you sent and some of them are very cool...the Jefferson lab one would be very cool to used on middle school students

CelesteR: I am bookmarking them all under Gaming with their titles and subjects to which they appeal. I am posting them on my Careers page of my website.

DebraSp: This next group of websites offer multiple games. Some are appropriate for schools, others are not. You will need to explore them and see what you can use.

MichaelM: <http://www.hrcglobal.net/links/astrosoftwarelinks.asp>

JaniceSG: There's also River City for science. It's out of Harvard. Not sure if it has gone public yet.

DebraSp: For those of you looking for specific content areas, you might find something you can use on these sites.

ShayneTr: When you bookmark the sites, could you please include appropriate age as well? Thanks.

DebraSp: I am very familiar with River City as Chris Dede is a good friend of mine. River City is a MUVE, but it is not a game.

DorethiaM: I can say I am overwhelmed. didn't realize these games were out there. Opens up a whole new world for me and all of us old timers.

DebraSp: Games involve a winner and a loser and River City is not set up as a competition.

BJB2 will add these games to the Playing to Learn group room also

JaniceSG: Oh, right.

RaylaS: I had no clue they were out there either..

DebraSp: Yes, easy to get overwhelmed.

RitaSo: Ditto

DavidWek: <http://muve.gse.harvard.edu/rivercityproject/>

DebraSp: River City is an excellent program and one that Middle School Science teachers should look into.

DebraSp: Multiple gaming sites - to be bookmarked.

SherylM: While I was looking at these, I was thinking of how reality has caught up with one of my favorite authors, Neal Stephenson (Cryptomicon, Baroque Cycle, In the Beginning was the Command Line and SnowCrash

DebraSp: Collection of Free online games - http://internetgames.about.com/od/freegames/Free_Online_Games.htm

DebraSp: Yes, Stephenson had a vision of the Internet that we are seeing coming true, especially with the growth of social networks.

DebraSp: Online Simulations -

DebraSp: <http://www.kented.org.uk/ngfl/software/simulations/index.htm>

CarlosJ: I've played many of the games on that free-online-games site

RitaSo: do these games appeal to girls

CarlosJ: they're really fast paced and some of them aren't very educational

DebraSp: A variety of different simulations - <http://www.simplay.net/>

DebraSp: That is true, Carlos, but there are some good links to Role-playing games

that tend to have more educational value.

MichaelM joined the room.

DebraSp: There has been research done on what appeals to girls.

SusanR: any games for K to 3, Debra

CarlosJ: that's why I didn't say they all weren't educational, just a few that I know from experience

DebraSp: Girls tend to prefer strategy games and ones that allow them to communicate with others.

CelesteR: One quick question, is there a very basic one, like Battleship Vocab, online game for high schoolers that you may know of? My students are gamers, but when it comes to the hard-core basics to prepare for a standard test, I want them to engage.

DebraSp: There are sites available for younger children. You might try Game Goo.
<http://www.cogcon.com/gamegoo/gooey.html>

DebraSp: I have not come across that one yet, Celeste, but I will keep a look out.

KarenTate: That one is good. I've used that-Game Goo

DebraSp: Any of you have access to handhelds at your schools?

CelesteR: No, only laptops.

MichaelM: My nephews love this site for pre-K
<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/sesamestreet>

DebraSp: I would also recommend StarFall at <http://www.starfall.com>

KimFl: we love the stuff from PBSKids too!

DebraSp: It is aimed at preschools and K students.

KarenTate: starfall is awesome

SherylM: You could play music with those animated icons on goo.lol

DebraSp: The reason I was asking about handhelds is MIT has produced a series of participatory simulations they have made available for free.

DebraSp: Handheld Simulations available -

CarlosJ joined the room.

DebraSp: <http://education.mit.edu/pda/>

MichaelM: They also teach young children motor skills and computer mouse use

DebraSp: I know this has been overwhelming in terms of the resources presented, but hopefully you can find one or two games that you can use.

BarbSa: There are the Greg Owlit games for fun ways to learn skills. I have used them with adults also

CarlosJ: I've noticed there are many video's out there for developing younger children, there must be tons of video games

DebraSp: For those of you with younger children, Webkinz is a good social network site that has multiple games available.

DebraSp: <http://www.webkinz.com>

SusanR: if you like starfall you will adore Roy the Zebra <http://www.roythezebra.com/>

DoloresG: I have enjoyed this very much. Starting tomorrow I will be checking out the links you provided. Thank you, Debra.

DebraSp: Participants have to adopt a pet (buy a stuff animal with a code attached) in order to participate in the network.

SusanR: my 6 year old niece is quite devoted to webkinz

DebraSp: You are welcome. Thank you for attending and for sharing more resources with me.

RaylaS: thank you very much for all the great web sites... I will use them later when I become a teacher

ShayneTr: Thanks Debra!

BJB2: Thanks, Debbie. This turned into a nice discussion with delightful input from the group!

KimFl: great sites Debra - thank you!

DebraSp smiles

DavidWek agrees with BJ

MichaelM: Thank you Debra. Great resources!

BarbSa: thanks Deb

JaniceSG: Thanks for the great resources!

DebraSp: Glad it was useful. Enjoy and happy gaming!

SherylM: This was great! I had hoped that someday someone would create more elaborate versions of Oh **DeEr**, the Pond, and the other early simulations made by the teachers of MECC