Percolating the Power of Play

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Champlain College—how are we different than most colleges?
The Emergent Media Center

- Student Driven, complementing Champlain’s EGD degree.
- Project based.
- A diversity of relationships.

For more information: www.champlain.edu/Emergent-Media-Center.html
Information Literacy in Champlain’s Core Curriculum

- Inquiry-based information literacy embedded in a four year, incremental, interdisciplinary general education curriculum.

- Assessed every semester, all four years, through rubric-based, ePortfolios.

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Why a game?
“Video gaming is pervasive in the lives of American teens—young teens and older teens, girls and boys, and teens from across the socioeconomic spectrum. Opportunities for gaming are everywhere, and teens are playing video games frequently. When asked, half of all teens reported playing a video game “yesterday.” Those who play daily typically play for an hour or more. Fully 97% of teens ages 12-17 play computer, web, portable, or console games.”

Pew Internet and American Life Project. Teens, Video Games, and Civics.
The Learning Potential of Games within Higher Education

Information Literacy

How can librarians re-envision what a video game is?

James Paul Gee defines a game as “a set of experiences a player participates in from a particular perspective…designed to set up certain goals for players, but often leaves players free to achieve these goals in their own way.”

(Gee, 23)
Games as petri dish for Info Lit:

“Information literacy competency extends learning beyond formal classroom settings…”

(ACRL Competency Standards for Higher Education).

“By presenting students with real-world situations and allowing them to play a game by applying newly learned library skills, the concept of information literacy loses its abstract, theoretical quality and becomes a relevant part of their lives.”

(Ameet Doshi, “How Gaming Could Improve Information Literacy”)

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Models for Connecting Gaming to Information Literacy
The Hero’s Journey

- A familiar model to gamers.
- “…the research process is a journey of transformation in which the researcher leaves behind the comfortable world that he or she knows, gains new knowledge, and then returns—changed in some way by his or her learning.” (Holmes, 19)
- Initially a model for both games
- Kuhlthau shows research to be affective, iterative, recursive, experiential, and strategic.

- Enormously helpful for gamers: structure moments to emphasize emotions rather than narrative.
From the models…

**EPIPHANIES:**
for librarians in the gaming model;
for gamers in the library model.

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The Games
Process Timeline
Semester by Semester

- **Fall 2007:**
  - Pitch idea of a game to EMC.
  - All student meeting to define IL.
  - Break into groups based on types of games.

- **Spring 2008:**
  - Selected two concepts to move forward.

- **Summer 2008:**
  - Workstudy students creating prototypes & full design documents.

- **Fall 2008:**
  - Critiques with the Library.
  - EMC moved to a new space.
  - Set deadline for Dec. completion.

- **Spring 2009:**
  - New teams to finish King and clean up Searchlight.
SearchLight

- Highlights the need for information literacy in multiple aspects of life.
- Presents a broadly-defined goal with player-driven specifics.
- World broken down into metaphorical resources.
- Free-roaming structure encourages exploration.
- Emphasis on information filtering and resource evaluation.
Dustin King in Locked and Literate

- Presents increasingly difficult questions for which the player must gather information in order to construct an answer.
- Select and present information appropriate to a particular audience.
- Evaluate electronic sources such as the Internet and databases, printed materials such as books and notes, and information from peers.
- Linear, narrative based game with multiple endings dependent upon player choices.
I know everything, Spade!
What is the game good for?

- A complement to our information literacy program.
- Helping us rethink what information literacy instruction can be.

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Fusing Fun into IL Instruction

Just one example…

- Describing a coke can in as many ways as we can think of.
- Connection to generating keywords for a database searching.
- Active learning, inquiry based, FUN!
- Adapted from Debbi Renfrow’s Developing Keywords Exercise in Empowering Students II: Teaching Information Literacy Concepts with hands-on and Minds-on Activityies.

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Challenges Faced

- Information literacy vs. bibliographic instruction;
- Student centric rather than library centric;
- The challenges of collaborating with student teams.

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To Take Out

We are not as different as we might think.

- Students give useful and important insight into how IL is understood.
- The opportunity for gaming as a tool in higher education libraries is STRONG.
- Sharing connections.

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Works Cited


Thank you.
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