

Design Paradox: Instructional Games

Katrin
Becker

Overview

- Introduction
- “Edutainment” then and now
- Educational Game Debates
 - Paradox 1: The Importance of Being Ernest
 - Paradox 2: GD vs. ID
 - Literacies
- ID for ED
- What’s Next

A selection of problems & questions – few –
answers...

Backstory

- What attracted me to CS
 - What I could do w/ it
- What got me into ID
 - What I could make w/ it

My end goal:

Teach Ed game design... ?

Understand Ed game design →

Understand game design →

Understand software design / understand entertainment design....

“Edutainment” not-so-great then and now

The good, the bad, & the ...

Problems:

- I Disappear (bury them when they're gone...)
- Someone is bound to say, “Hey! I *like* that game.”
- Try and find someone who will go one record saying something bad about a *specific* educational game...

None-the-less here I go...

“Edutainment” not-so-great then and now



Mario is Missing



“Edutainment” pretty good then and now



EcoQuest



NMC Campus, SL



Oregon Trail



Virtual Leader

Game Debates

In Game Studies:
Ludology vs. Narratology

In Games for Learning:
Learning vs. Fun

Instructional Design vs. Game Design

Game as receptacle vs. Game as method

Educational Game Debates

To make progress in games for learning & educational game design:

Step 1: Admit we have a problem.
(actually, we have several)

...

Educational Game Debates

Instructional designers suck all the fun out of games.

Game designers drive all the learning out of games.



Educational Game Debates

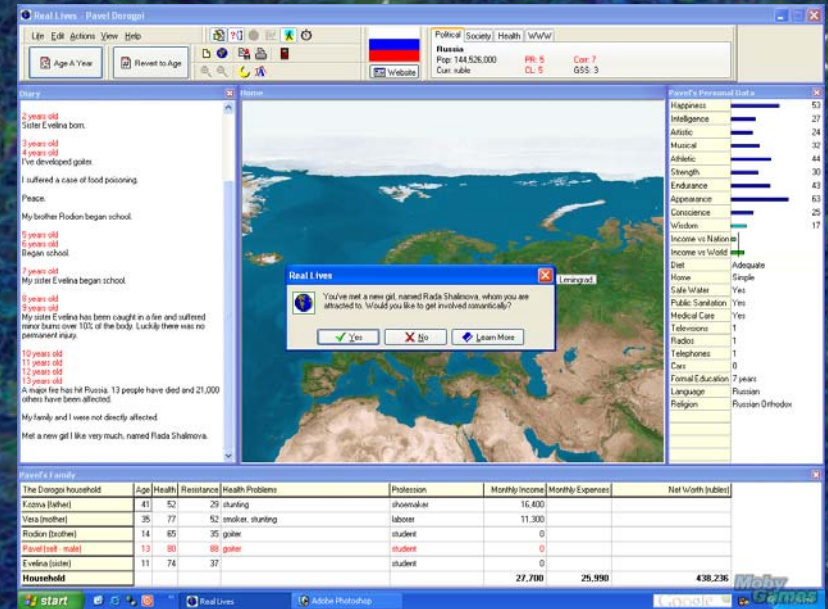
Games Design
is all we need.



Instructional Design
is all we need.

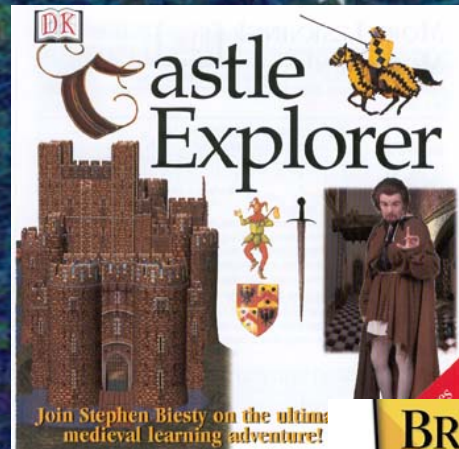


Grim Fandango

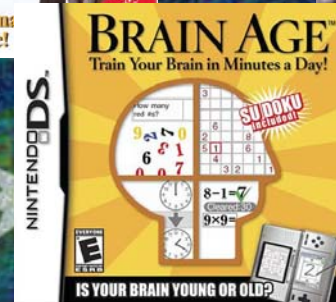


Real Lives

Educational Game Debates



Join Stephen Biesty on the ultimate medieval learning adventure!



of the Dead

All Instructional Games must have the learning fully integrated into the game story.

We can wrap a game around any instruction and make it more interesting to learners.



“Edutainment” then and now

Edutainment → Serious Games

Solitary gaming → multiplayer / social
gaming

Disciplinary → interdisciplinary

More Gamers

Older Gamers

Internet is useful

Machines are powerful

Google, YouTube, DeviantArt,....

Paradox 1: The importance of being Ernest

Forced to play → no longer game (Caillois)

Play <-> seriousness are opposites
(Huizinga)

“I send my child to school to LEARN, not to have fun.” (unidentified teacher)

FUN is a bad word.

Engagement isn't.

Paradox 2: GD vs. ID

Instructional Design

Content (what)

Receptacle for content

Vantage Point: Formal
Education

Ed. Credentials

Game Design

Player Experience
(how)

Teaching Method

Vantage Point:
Entertainment
(SENG?)

Industry Credentials

Literacies

Traditional Literacy = read AND write
Games literacy = play AND make

What about literacy w.r.t. education
generally and Instructional Design in
particular?

Game Literacy

Literacy w.r.t. Education *means*

- Knowing about games (beyond what we've heard from headlines & Jack Thompson) *means*
 - Game experience (playing)
 - Game Reflection (thinking about / contextualizing)

Literacy w.r.t. Instructional Design *Means*

- All of the above *PLUS*
 - Overview of games studies (genres, context, sociological implications)
 - Knowledge of Game construction (the industry, commercial vs. serious, the technology...)

ID for ED

How to design good Ed games w/o knowing how to design good games??

How to design good Ed games (or even use COTS) w/o having played good games??

The need for credibility in formal education *means* ID must play a role.

Summary & What's Next

Understand more about game design.
Find common language for designers.
Including fun.
Bring literacy to Ed biz.
Find ways to combine GD & ID.

Image Sources:

Mario (New Super Mario Bros.) <http://mario.nintendo.com/>

Blaster (Math Blaster) photo taken of game CD sleeve

Carmen San Diego http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carmen_Sandiego

Fowl Words:

<http://www.mousebreaker.com/games/fowlwords2/play.php> &
<http://www.miniclip.com/games/fowl-words/en/>

Castle Explorer www.educate-me.net

Brain Age <http://www.brainage.com/launch/what.jsp>

AI Wars, Castle of Dr. Brain, Food Force, My Sim Aquarium, Jungle Quest, RealLives : <http://www.mobygames.com>

Math Blaster:

http://www.consoleclassix.com/gameinfo_mathblaster_gen.html &
<http://www.mathblaster.com>

Second Life NMC Campus: <http://www.nmc.org/sl/about/>

Echo: Secrets of the Lost Cavern

<http://www.gamespot.com/pc/adventure/echosecretsofthelostcavern/screenindex.html>



Thanks!