Edtech 531 Teaching and Learning in Virtual Worlds

Syllabus

Introduction:

The classroom has changed dramatically in the last couple of decades. Just think, students used to dread going to class. They hated sitting in rows, listening to lectures, writing papers, taking notes, quizzes, and tests. They used to believe that school was irrelevant, arbitrary, and just something you had to do. Most of our students would rather milk a goat than watch another history video. Good thing all of that has changed, right? But sarcasm aside, the landscape of education is changing.

Our conception of educational spaces has changed radically over the last several decades. We have evolved our notions of where and how learning should occur. Experiences now trump text, authentic assessments over multiple-choice testing, and unique digital spaces for exploration over only the traditional classroom built in factory rows.

“Creating experiences in framing opportunities for reflection. This bolsters problem-solving and transfer.”

In addition to classrooms as hubs of experience, virtual spaces serve learners in ways that the real world cannot. The laws of physics are bent, broken, or rewritten entirely. Vast and imaginative spaces can be constructed, stored digitally, and recalled on demand. Participants can interact over immense distances and, with translation tools, communicate with foreign cultures. Education in virtual worlds shrinks the globe. This is what we will explore.

It is important for today's teachers to understand and embrace current trends in the use of technology, video games, and social networking in a multitude of areas. Technology and its tools saturate every part of our modern culture. Social interaction is now largely mediated by electronic devices, entertainment can be delivered in myriad digital ways on countless tools, and more than ever a generation of students is growing up with innate intelligence geared toward this technology. Students today have never known a world without the Internet, without mobile phones, rich video games and their environments, or without more computing speed and power in their pockets than were used in all of the Apollo lunar missions. They are the digital generation.

In practical terms, you create authentic projects that can be used in your teaching. You will demonstrate fulfillment of the above standards by building documents and artifacts that could/will be used in your classroom.

Class Schedule:
This course is one of the few in the Educational Technology program that has a synchronous, weekly meeting time.
Our class meets on Wednesdays at 6 PM Mountain Time in a predetermined virtual location.

The first class on Wednesday, will include a live meet up in a virtual world. The first week will be a simple, web-based space using a Jibe VW powered by Unity, a name you will get to know well. Our meeting time will consistently be 6:00 MT each Wednesday and we will meet for 2 hours. If this does not work with your schedule, unfortunately there is not an alternative way to participate. As one of only two, fully synchronous courses in our program, the meeting time is critical and crucial to the experience.

If you would like to visit the first virtual world classroom space we'll be using, click this link. You'll be prompted to download any missing drivers. I have found this works best in Safari and Chrome although others have had good luck with Firefox. Check it out long before the first class to make sure you have what you need. I selected this VW first because it offers such an easy entree into virtual worlds with no clients or software to download and no accounts to create.

http://jibemicro3.reactiongrid.com/3dgamelab/

These virtual locations vary and will be communicated through our 3-D GameLab LMS. The following virtual worlds will be used and the following schedule is subject to modification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Virtual World space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>Jibe/Reaction grid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8</td>
<td>Minecraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Second Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>Club Penguin/Cloud Party/Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>Various for final projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conceptual Framework

College of Education - The Professional Educator

Boise State University strives to develop knowledgeable educators who integrate complex roles and dispositions in the service of diverse communities of learners. Believing that all children, adolescents, and adults can learn, educators dedicate themselves to supporting that learning. Using effective approaches that promote high levels of student achievement, educators create environments that prepare learners to be citizens who contribute to a complex world. Educators serve learners as reflective practitioners, scholars and artists, problem solvers, and partners.
**Department of Educational Technology Mission**
The Department of Educational Technology supports the study and practice of facilitating and improving learning of a diverse population by creating, using, managing, and evaluating appropriate technological processes and resources. Believing technology is a tool that enhances and expands the educational environment, we promote the use of current and emergent technologies for teaching and learning in a dynamic global society. Educational technologists are leaders and innovators, serving in institutions of higher education, public or private school settings, federal, state, or local educational agencies, and educational organizations in the private sector.

**ISTE NETS for Teachers**
The following is from the [ISTE web site](#):

The NETS for Teachers (NETS•T) were originally released in 2000, following the acclaimed NETS for Students (NETS•S) in 1998, which set the bar for integration of technology in education. The NETS•T 2000 defined the fundamental concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes for applying technology in educational settings.

Rapid advances in technology are putting new demands on educators and students. ISTE launched a refresh of the NETS•T in 2007 and unveiled the new NETS•T in 2008. The refreshed ISTE NETS will provide a framework for educators to use as they transition schools from Industrial Age to Digital Age places of learning.

I. Facilitate and Inspire Student Learning and Creativity - Teachers use their knowledge of subject matter, teaching and learning, and technology to facilitate experiences that advance student learning, creativity, and innovation in both face-to-face and virtual environments. Teachers:

- promote, support, and model creative and innovative thinking and inventiveness.
- engage students in exploring real-world issues and solving authentic problems using digital tools and resources.
- promote student reflection using collaborative tools to reveal and clarify students' conceptual understanding and thinking, planning, and creative processes.
- model collaborative knowledge construction by engaging in learning with students, colleagues, and others in face-to-face and virtual environments.

II. Design and Develop Digital-Age Learning Experiences and Assessments - Teachers design, develop, and evaluate authentic learning experiences and assessment incorporating contemporary tools and resources to maximize content learning in context and to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes identified in the NETS•S. Teachers:

- design or adapt relevant learning experiences that incorporate digital tools and resources to promote student learning and creativity.
• develop technology-enriched learning environments that enable all students to pursue their individual curiosities and become active participants in setting their own educational goals, managing their own learning, and assessing their own progress.
• customize and personalize learning activities to address students' diverse learning styles, working strategies, and abilities using digital tools and resources.
• provide students with multiple and varied formative and summative assessments aligned with content and technology standards and use resulting data to inform learning and teaching.

III. Model Digital-Age Work and Learning - Teachers exhibit knowledge, skills, and work processes representative of an innovative professional in a global and digital society. Teachers:

• demonstrate fluency in technology systems and the transfer of current knowledge to new technologies and situations.
• collaborate with students, peers, parents, and community members using digital tools and resources to support student success and innovation.
• communicate relevant information and ideas effectively to students, parents, and peers using a variety of digital-age media and formats.
• model and facilitate effective use of current and emerging digital tools to locate, analyze, evaluate, and use information resources to support research and learning.

IV. Promote and Model Digital Citizenship and Responsibility - Teachers understand local and global societal issues and responsibilities in an evolving digital culture and exhibit legal and ethical behavior in their professional practices. Teachers:

• advocate, model, and teach safe, legal, and ethical use of digital information and technology, including respect for copyright, intellectual property, and the appropriate documentation of sources.
• address the diverse needs of all learners by using learner-centered strategies providing equitable access to appropriate digital tools and resources.
• promote and model digital etiquette and responsible social interactions related to the use of technology and information.
• develop and model cultural understanding and global awareness by engaging with colleagues and students of other cultures using digital-age communication and collaboration tools.

V. Engage in Professional Growth and Leadership - Teachers continuously improve their professional practice, model lifelong learning, and exhibit leadership in their school and professional community by promoting and demonstrating the effective use of digital tools and resources. Teachers:
• participate in local and global learning communities to explore creative applications of technology to improve student learning.
• exhibit leadership by demonstrating a vision of technology infusion, participating in shared decision making and community building, and developing the leadership and technology skills of others.
• evaluate and reflect on current research and professional practice on a regular basis to make effective use of existing and emerging digital tools and resources in support of student learning.
• contribute to the effectiveness, vitality, and self-renewal of the teaching profession and of their school and community.

Instructor:
Chris Haskell / Office: E-332A (Education Building) / Phone: 426-4217 / Email: chrishaskell@boisestate.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 10:00am-12:00noon / please feel free to add me as a friend in you Facebook and message me if you need assistance. / Skype: Dalai Haskell / SL: Dalai Haskell / Twitter: Edtech202

Text/Resources/Materials:

Text:
No text for this class, just selected readings and experiences.

Learning management system:
We will be using the 3-D GameLab learning management system, developed at Boise State. This course will NOT use the Educational Technology department Moodle site.

Software/Virtual Space (read carefully):
Taking a traditional online course usually only requires that you have access to web- The software tools for this class will be entirely web or desktop-based. While it is possible to explore other environments such as Xbox live, Wii, PlayStation 3, and others, the majority of our virtual world interaction will be on personal computers, both Apple and PC. In most cases, dual platform tools were selected to allow us to participate synchronously.

You'll notice that there is no cost for textbooks this semester. However, there will be a couple of fees associated with accessing certain software. Minecraft is currently the only paid service on the list. However, our explorations may take us in other directions. It may be possible that another $20 or so for additional services/games may be necessary.

• Jibe/Reaction Grid (http://jibemicro3.reactiongrid.com/3dgamelab/)
• Minecraft ($20, but no textbook)
• World of Warcraft (Trial version)
• Cloud Party
• Club Penguin
• Second Life
• and others...

Hardware:
Because we will be working with specific software titles, which cannot be supplemented or replaced, it is necessary that you have a strong enough computer to handle these programs (SEE ABOVE). It is also necessary for you to have Internet access. If you are reading this syllabus it is likely you have met this burden.

Quest-Based Learning/Quest Tracking Tool
We will be using a game-based format for scoring. Rather than focusing on a percentage of possible points against a total (which serves as a form of subtractive scoring) this course will score more like a game. You will gain experience points for completed assignments. The number of activities available to you is flexible. You may choose to do a handful of more difficult or complex activities and assignments which offer higher XP or a large number of simpler artifacts with a lower average XP. There will be no modules, chapters, or other overt structures by which assignments will be transmitted or collected.

You will have the ability to choose your activities based on interest, skill set, type, comfort, and other factors. These “quests” will range from short and simple, to graduated or sequenced, to more complex and time consuming. Many larger assignments will be broken into a sequence of smaller, more achievable elements. Some of these elements will take as little as 15 minutes to complete.

We will also be using a quest-tracking tool created to allow the ability to select activities to complete, track experience points, and submit completed activities and assignments. This tool also serves as a grade book for the course. The login will be sent to you after the course begins.

Course Grading
We will be using a game-based format for scoring. Rather than focusing on a percentage of possible points against a total (which serves as a form of deductive scoring) this course will score more like a game. You will gain experience points for completed activities.

Your final grade will be a product of your experience points (XP) AND submitting your completed final project, which will be a designed virtual world learning experience. Failure to submit a completed project will result in an INCOMPLETE or a failing grade at the discretion of the instructor. Due to the unique sequencing of course material, all assignments will be due at the completion of the class as part of the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>XP</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000+</td>
<td>Expedition Leader</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750</td>
<td>Explorer</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td>Adventurer FC</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1250</td>
<td>Adventurer</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>Trekker 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Class</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700</td>
<td>Trekker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>Voyager 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>Voyager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>Pioneer 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Class</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Pioneer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-99</td>
<td>Wanderer</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Absences feature heavily into the grading system. In order to help maintain an environment by which each student can be successful, a regular class attendance is vital. Two absences will be permitted without penalty. On the third absence, a full letter grade will be deducted from the final grade. Each additional absence after the third will result in an additional letter grade loss per occurrence.

This excludes University sanctioned absences for clubs, sports, or other academic endeavors as well as severe illness, extreme personal hardship, or other extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the student.

We'll be using a tool we created especially for this unique brand of quest-based learning called 3D GameLab. Here is an image of what it looks like.
Course Policies

Communication:
Department policy - instructors will respond to emails and/or phone calls in a timely manner – usually within 24 hours (weekdays, but may be longer on a weekend or with advance notice to students).

Assignment Posting:
Department policy – major assignments will be posted at least one week in advance of the assignment due date. (Due to the unique sequencing of course material, all assignments will be due at the completion of the class as part of the Portfolio.)

You are responsible for completing assignments, participating in discussions, and attending class. This course maintains an open book policy on all projects and assignments. You're welcome to use any resources you locate that are helpful in your learning. However, reuse, read-purposing, or plagiarism of any kind will be dealt with severely (SEE BSU CODE OF CONDUCT) Department polices states “Students must be informed of their progress toward the final course grade at regular intervals.
Assignments will be reviewed and evaluated by the instructor within one week after the posted assignment due date."

Technical Difficulties:
On occasion, you may experience problems with accessing the system or files located within it, with your Internet service, and/or other computer related problems. Do make the instructor aware if a technical problem prevents you from completing coursework. BroncoMail - http://helpdesk.boisestate.edu/email/Broncomail/

Reasonable Accommodations:
Any student who feels s/he may need accommodations based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. You will also need to contact the Disability Resource Center at 208-426-1583 located in the Administration Building, room 114 to meet with a specialist and coordinate reasonable accommodations for any documented disability.

Citing and Documentation:
If you rely on a resource, cite it. It is not necessary to use a specific citation structure. You may use any system you are comfortable with as long as it offers a clear path back to the source.

Code of Conduct:
All students of the University should abide by Boise State University's Student Code of Conduct on academic dishonesty. You can find the University's Policy at www2.boisestate.edu/student conduct. This web address also outlines disciplinary measures for those who violate this code. This can be found under the Conduct Sanctions section. Please spend some time reviewing this site so that you are aware of your academic responsibilities.

Original Work:
All work submitted must show your own ideas and current understanding. Assignments completed for our courses must be original documents developed by yourself (finding applicable lessons on the Internet or from some other resource and claiming them as your own is NOT acceptable). You are welcome to get ideas from other sources; however you must revise the activity significantly and cite your source. Also, an assignment you have designed for one course cannot be used in its exact form for another course that you are currently taking.