

Preface

This book represents the culmination of a decade of game-based learning research spanning the years 2005–2014. It was conducted in the context of my academic work at the National Institute of Education, Singapore. The research effort subsumes conceptualization and theoretical construction, game design and development, classroom research interventions in Singapore schools, and sustained teacher professional development to support teachers' uptake of game-based learning.

In this book, I present a critical evaluation of current approaches related to the use of digital games in education. I identify two competing paradigms: that of games-to-teach and games-to-learn. Arguing in favor of the latter, I advance the case for approaching game-based learning through the theoretical lens of performance, rooted in play and dialog, to unlock the power of digital games for twenty-first-century learning. Drawing upon my research, three concrete exemplars of game-based learning curricula are described and discussed. The challenge of advancing game-based learning in education is then addressed in the context of school reform. Finally, future prospects of and educational opportunities for game-based learning are articulated.

I believe that readers of this book will find the explication of performance theory applied to game-based learning especially useful. This work constitutes my original theorization. Readers may expect to derive four main benefits: (1) an explication of the difference between game-based-teaching and game-based learning, and why this difference is of critical importance, (2) an exposition of the theory of game-based learning as performance, (3) concrete exemplars and research outcomes relating to three game-based learning curricula that have been empirically evaluated in schools, and (4) an understanding of complex issues related to the human side of school change that must be effectively addressed to achieve successful take-up of game-based learning in schools. Related to item (3), the detailed descriptions of the educational games in Chaps. 4–6, supported by color screenshots, should prove invaluable to game designers seeking a deeper understanding of how to inflect pedagogical principles into educational game conceptualization and design.

Games-To-Teach or Games-To-Learn

Unlocking the Power of Digital Game-Based Learning
Through Performance

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