LGTC 5032 Digital Games & Languages Learning

[Abridged/Tentative] Syllabus & Course Description
July 2nd, 2016 to August 26th, 2016
Instructor & Course Guests Information

Edwige Simon, PhD, Elevate Program Director.
I have been working in the field of language education for fifteen years. I currently work at the Anderson Language & Technology Center at CU Boulder (UB) where I run various programs in language instruction and technology. I have a PhD from the ATLAS Institute at CU Boulder (2012). My research interests focus on teacher professional development and the preparation of educators to teach online. I served as the 2013-2015 Programs Director of the International Association for Language Learning Technology, and I am the founding editor of the FLTMAG, a magazine dedicated to technology integration in the foreign language classroom.

Course Guests

Several guests will visit us virtually to answer questions about various course related topics. The Q&As take place in Elevate’s private Facebook group.

Unit 1: Gamification in L2TL

Nick Einterz, ESL instructor at the International English Center.
Nick will join us and answer your questions about the strategies he used to gamify a STEM ESL course using the popular tablet game Minecraft.

Unit 2: Game-Enhanced L2TL

Kara Behnke, PhD or Gamegodde55.
Kara’s academic background explored how gaming supports student learning and motivation in computer science education and she currently works as Teaching & Learning Specialist for data and technology courses at Coursera.org. Kara will answer your questions about her doctoral work and the role of games in education.

Unit 3: Game-Based L2TL

Terri Nelson, PhD, Cal State University, San Bernardino.
Terri will discuss Paris Occupé, a role-playing game created using ARIS, in which students take on fictional identities to learn about Nazi-occupied Paris.
Course Conclusion
Stephane Jankowski, Game Producer, Ubisoft, Lyon, France (@StephJank).
Educational games are often criticised for not being as engaging and high-quality as commercial games. Stephane who has over 10 years experience in the gaming industry and produced games such as Assassin's Creed Unity and The Crew will shed some light on the resources that popular commercial games require.

Course Information
LGTC 5032 is a foundation course in using games and gamification strategies in the second language classroom. It will introduce the field of gaming, then explore how gaming can be used to enhance language instruction.

There are no prerequisites for this course. Digital Games & Language Learning is offered fully online. It is a 2 credit hour graduate course. You can expect to spend between 10 and 12 hours weekly on this course. Note that this is an 8 week course. It is condensed and therefore intensive. Make sure to reserve plenty of time to complete the various assignments.

Learning Goals

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Define and explain the difference between the three main approaches to digital games in L2TL (game-informed, game-enhanced and game-based L2TL).
- Evaluate the educational affordances and challenges associated with each of the 3 main approaches.
- List and explain main gamification strategies.
- Use appropriate professional language to discuss game mechanics in a learning context.
- Apply gamifications strategies to a specific language learning unit.
- Develop wrap around activities to exploit the educational potential of COTs.
- Evaluate the educational potential of various COTs.
- Design and develop a simple language learning game-based activity.
- Apply ACTFL standards for teaching and learning to gameful learning contexts.
Course Calendar

Week 1, July 2nd to July 9th:
Introduction to Digital Games and L2TL*

We will start this course with an examination of the three main approaches to the use of games in education in L2TL: the gamification approach (applying game mechanics to lessons and curricula), the game-enhanced approach (integrating games not originally designed for educational purposes in the L2TL curriculum) and game-based or serious games (games built specifically for teaching and learning purposes).

Week 2 & 3: July 10th to July 23rd
Unit 1: Gamification in L2TL

We will focus our attention on game-informed or gamification strategies for L2TL. We will learn the fundamentals of gaming mechanics and how they can be applied to teaching and learning contexts. You will be prompted to discuss and reflect upon the controversy surrounding the use of games in teaching, specifically the edutainment argument. You will explore and become familiar with various gamification tools such as the Open badge for foreign Language Education initiative (UT Austin). At the end of this unit, you will collaborate with your classmates to gamify a lesson or a unit of your choice.

Week 4 & 5: July 24th to August 6th:
Unit 2: Game Enhanced Language Learning

In this unit, we will examine game-enhanced approaches to L2TL. We will learn about the educational affordances and embedded risks of repurposing games not originally designed for educational purposes in the L2TL curriculum. Such games include social networking games (e.g.: Farmville), MMOG (e.g.: World of warcraft), COTS (e.g.:FoodForce), tablet games (e.g.: Minecraft). We will also examine the case of autonomous and incidental language learning via digital games outside the classroom context. At this end of this unit, you will work collaboratively with your classmates to create a wrap-around activity for a game of your choice.
Week 6 & 7: August 7th to August 20th:
Unit 3: Serious Games (Gamed-Based L2TL)

In this final unit, we will look at Serious Games or game-based L2TL. Serious games refer to the family of games not designed solely for entertainment purposes but rather for learning purposes. We will look at two specific case studies: Mentira & Paris Occupé. You will also learn about a popular and user friendly game building platform for mobile games (ARIS). At the end of this unit, you will design a prototype for a game-based L2TL activity.

Week 8: August 21th to August 26th:
The Future of Digital Games and L2TL: Challenges and Opportunities.

In this final unit, you will read about, discuss and reflect upon the opportunities and challenges associated with the use of digital games in language education. With your team, you will write your final report with your conclusion on the value of digital games for L2TL.

Course Assessment

- Texts/Videos Discussion: 20%
- Discussion Moderation: 10%  
  - You will take turns leading and moderating the asynchronous discussions.
- Deliverables: 40%  
  - Deliverables are small projects connected to the topic of the week: game explorations, reflection papers, lesson plan writing, etc.
- Final Project: 30%  
  - Team report on Report on Games and Language Education: Learning Opportunities or Edutainment? (30%)

Textbooks and Materials

All the readings will be provided through our course shell through links to available resources.