

Athens, Ohio



The Post Online

Gaming in the classroom: programs make learning fun for Athens students

Published Thursday, August 3, 2006.

Collin Minnis / Staff Writer / cm123803@ohiou.edu



Kristin Eberts / For The Post / ke277604@ohiou.edu

During a presentation on Friday, Ohio University engineering student Scott Nykl and Athens Middle School science teacher Kurt Nostrant explain the video game they developed to help kids learn science. Their efforts are part of the Science and Technology Enrichment for Appalachian Middle-Schoolers program, in which students from the Russ College of Engineering and Technology are paired with middle school teachers to develop an educational computer program that can be used in the classroom.

Video games have become more educational, and this was recently demonstrated by the development of science and technological video games by Ohio University engineering graduate students and local middle school teachers. A Friday demonstration of video games developed to spark interest in science and mathematics provided a glimpse into the future of learning in the classroom.

“Kids are going to be playing video games,” said Chang Liu, assistant professor in the Russ College of Engineering and Technology. “They might as well be playing these.”

The project, titled the Science and Technology Enrichment for Appalachian Middle-Schoolers, will develop games that they hope will enhance learning. It will be using visual aids and focus on hard-to-learn concepts that a high percentage of kids have trouble comprehending. “The idea is to implement and test these games within our own schools (...) before publicizing and releasing them to the general public,” said David Chelberg, associate professor in electrical engineering and computer science.

Liu and Chelberg, along with Teresa Franklin, an instructional technology associate professor in the College of Education, came up with the idea to use video games to help kids learn in the classroom.

The development of these games is made possible as part of a \$1.67 million National Science Foundation grant. According to a

news release, the grant is one of the largest NSF grants OU has ever received.

“Here we are in our beginning stages,” Liu said. “We will use the entire grant over the course of three years, improving the games with feedback from the middle schools.”

Middle school teachers from Athens, Alexander, Belpre, Federal Hocking, Miller and Roseville schools were paired up with engineering graduate students to work together to mold a game that is both fun and pragmatic.

“It’s important for us to work together,” Jacqueline Hlubb said, an eighth-grade science teacher at Belpre Middle School who plans on using the video game as a review for the state-required achievement tests to teach fundamental physics concepts of mass and acceleration. “It allows us to look at it (the game) from different points of view,” she said.

The games presented ranged from Pac-manesque mazes with problem-solving questions popping up with a blinking dot to real life scenarios depicting the relationships between independent and dependent variables.

Reader Comments NOTE: Reader comments are not regulated by The Post.

Submit a comment to The Post Online

Only logged-in users can submit comments

Message: