Design Paradox: Instructional Game Design

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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
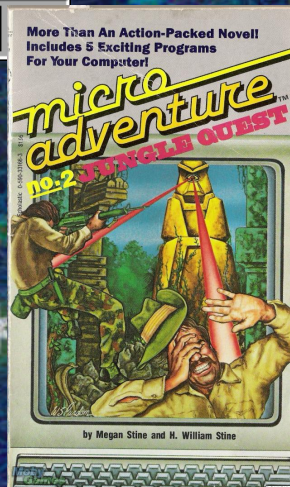
The good, the bad, & the …

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

Jerusalem

"Edutainment" pretty good then and now

ecco THE DOLPHIN DEFENDER OF THE FUTURE

EcoQuest

Castle of DR.BRAIN

Oregon Trail

VIRTUAL U

NMC Campus, SL

Food Force

Virtual Leader

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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

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Educational Game Debates

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

Step 1: Admit we have a problem.

(actually, we have several)

…

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Educational Game Debates

Instructional designers suck all the fun out of games.

Game designers drive all the learning out of games.

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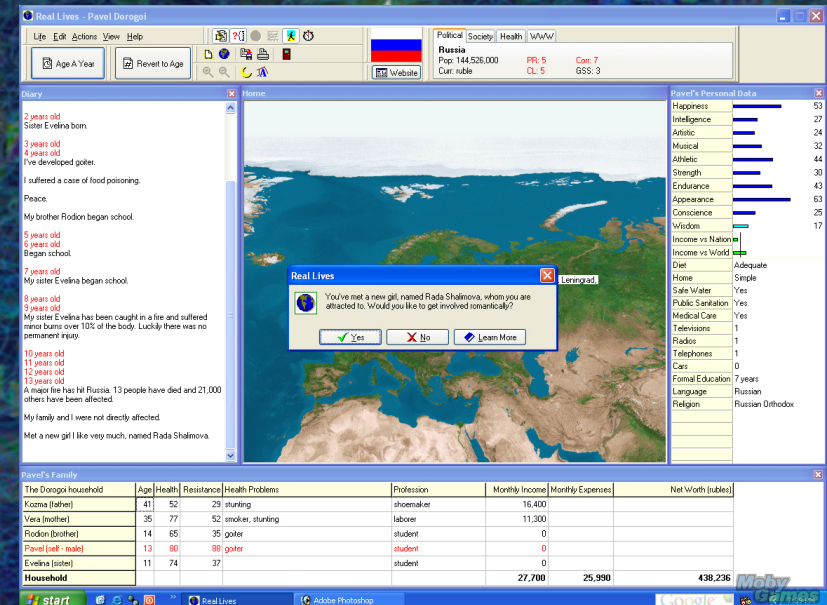**Design Paradox**

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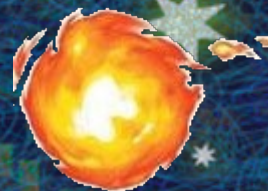
Educational Game Debates

Games Design is all we need. ⟷ **Instructional Design is all we need.**
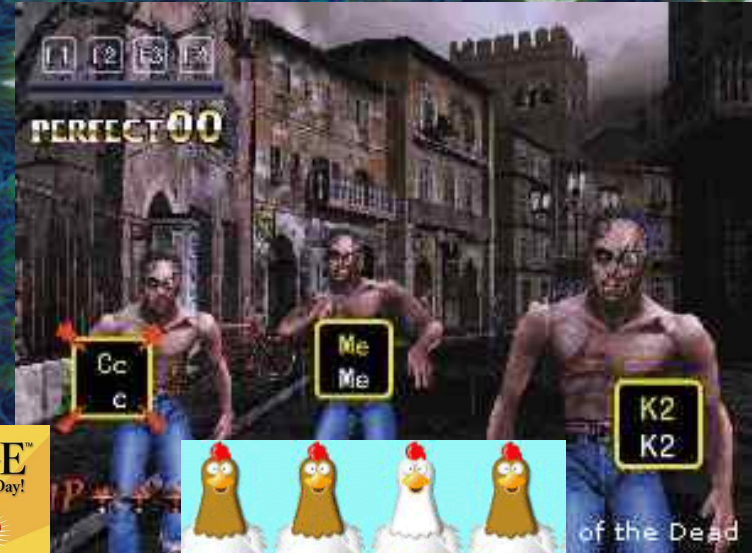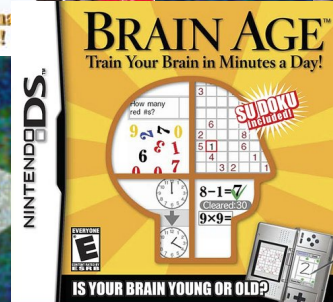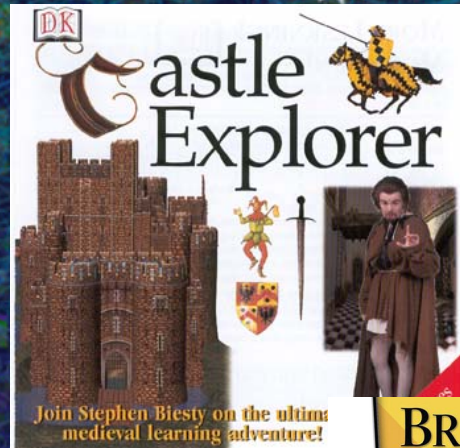

Grim Fandango

Real Lives

Educational Game Debates

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.

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"Edutainment" then and now

- Did not live up to expectations

So…

- Game designers shied away from ED games

- Educators became suspicious of games

"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,…

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Paradox 1: The importance of being Ernest

Forced to play➔ no longer game (Roger Caillois, 1961)

Play <-> seriousness are opposites (Johan Huizinga, 1950)

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

FUN is a bad word. (FUN = frivolous = wasted time)

Engagement isn't.

Paradox 2: GD vs. ID

Instructional Design	Game Design
Content (what)	Player Experience (how)
Receptacle for content	Teaching Method
Vantage Point: Formal Education	Vantage Point: Entertainment (SENG?)
Ed. Credentials	Industry Credentials

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Literacies

Traditional Literacy = read AND write

Games literacy = play AND make

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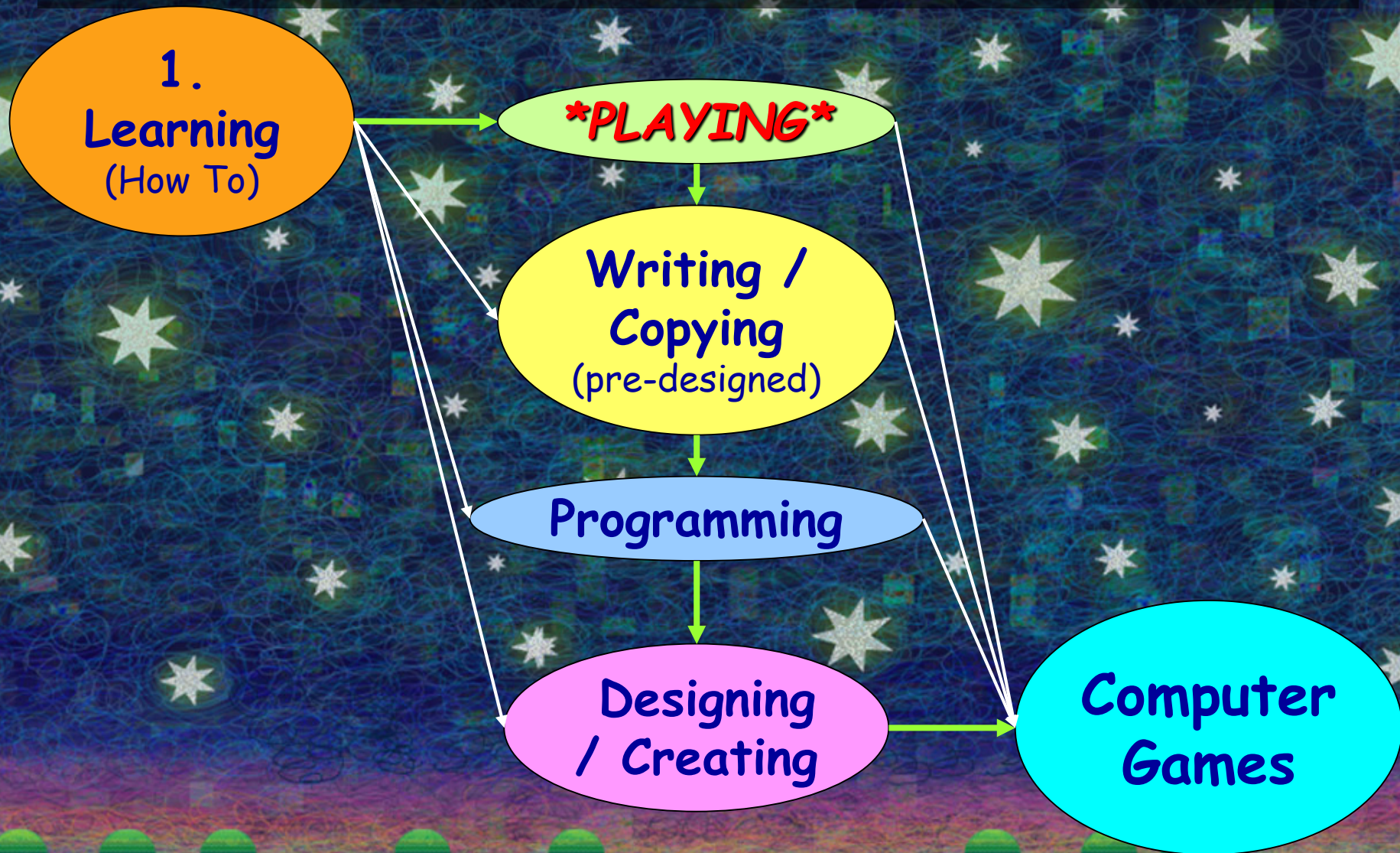
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Game Literacy

Game Literacy w.r.t. Education *means*

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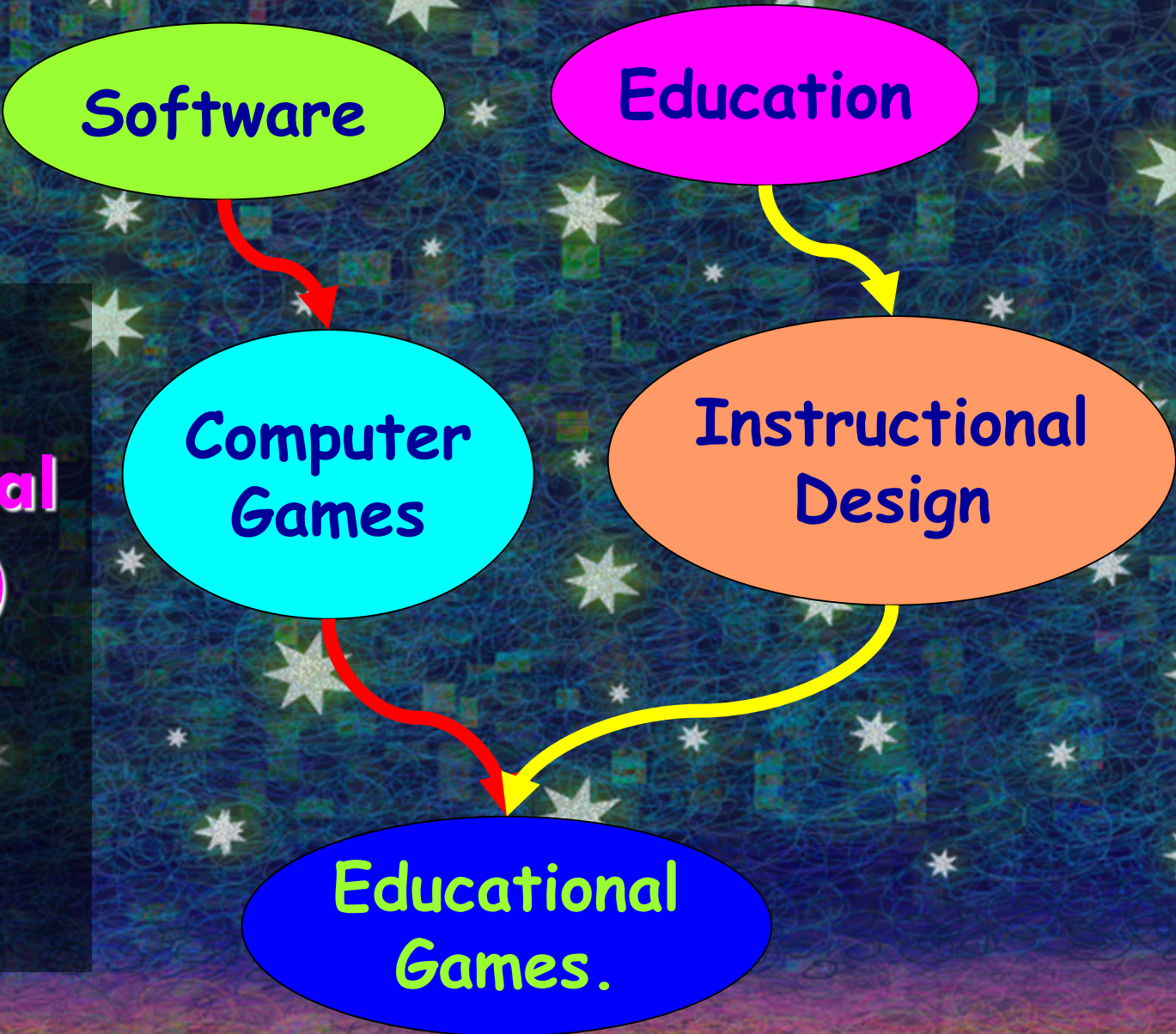 - Game Reflection (thinking about / contextualizing)

Game 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…)

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Steps to GAME Design Literacy

1. Learning (How To)

PLAYING

Writing / Copying (pre-designed)

Programming

Designing / Creating

Computer Games

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Steps to Educational (Serious) Games Design Literacy

Software → Computer Games

Education → Instructional Design

Computer Games + Instructional Design → Educational Games.

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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.

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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.

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Image Sources:

Mario (New Super Marion 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/s
   creenindex.html

Thanks!

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