

In This Issue

- Learning Technologies & Playful Ecologies
1
- The Link to the Essential Actions Handbook
2
- Games, Tech Tools, Media, Oh my!
3
- Interview with Constance Steinkuehler
4-6
- Connections to Essential Actions
4-6
- Playing with Language: Using Games with ELLs
7-8
- Evaluating Tech Tools for Learning & Academic Language
9-11
- Parting thoughts
12
- Resources & References
13

Learning Technologies and Playful Ecologies

Miss Estay is a 4th grade teacher who also helps out with the afterschool program at her school. As part of the afterschool activities, she began using a game designed for struggling readers with a group of 4th grade students. She immediately noticed some interesting things about how the students used the game. Even though the game was a single-player game, the students clustered in groups to play it together, or to watch. They gave each other hints and passed the game set back and forth. Some of the kids had a lot of trouble with the amount of reading in the game, and she watched as other students stepped in and read the dialog out loud to support their peers. Some of these students would barely make a peep in class and here they were reading to one another, sharing hints and problem solving together to beat the game!



It didn't stop at that. As Miss Estay continued to incorporate the game into the program, she started to see vocabulary gains among the students. These gains were even more significant for the English language learners (ELLs). When she shared her observations with colleagues, one educator challenged her by asking, "How do you know it was the game?" And indeed, Miss Estay couldn't claim it was the game in isolation. But she also couldn't deny that this game seemed to be the catalyst for other dynamics that were emerging in the group of students, dynamics that elicited the use of targeted language in the game and were rooted in social interactions that equaled or exceeded those of other learning activities. She began to wonder if this tech tool (and others like it) could be meaningfully incorporated into the curriculum as a way to provide linguistic interaction in the four language domains. But there are so many games and technology tools out there, how was she to know which ones would be beneficial to her students?

Ties to WIDA Standards

WIDA standards exist to promote equity for ELLs by representing the social, instructional, and academic language they need to engage with peers, educators, and school curricula. While the contexts supporting language activities may vary greatly, the role of the standards in guiding the ways language is supported can promote linguistic development and success for all language learners. Find WIDA standards at: www.wida.us/standards.

OCTOBER 2014

Framing our Conversation

The glue that sticks many different kinds of “knowing” together is language (Vygotsky, 1978). Through the languages of schooling, students encounter not just languages of content areas, but also those of social, emotional, and instructional communication. Equity for ELLs includes giving them access to all these languages of schooling, while honoring their unique voices and values (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). From a broader view, promoting information literacy and diverse digital experiences engages ELLs in rich forms of problem-solving, collaboration, creativity, and production, the interactions through which language is built (Himmele & Himmele, 2009).

Meaning is not simply stored language, it is stored experience (Gee, 2005). So language develops as it is used, and by *doing* activities that are *meaningful*. Technology tools can provide platforms for these types of activities. Educators can use different kinds of technology tools with language learners to promote interest and engagement, and to personalize instruction and assessment. The right tools can prompt authentic, meaningful language use by learners, and give ELLs a variety of ways to show what they know. These tools could include anything from well-designed ebooks or games, to apps and programs for creating or building products.

When they think about how to use technology to support language-learning environments, teachers of language learners shift from broad stroke questions of limited value to critical questions about specific tools in their classroom environment and learning contexts. They no longer simply wonder if tech tools are good or bad. Instead, educators can ask what particular tools might be good for. Instead of only asking if a tool replaces reading, writing, or social interactions, educators can ask how it might spark appropriate and intentional linguistic practices. And instead of asking how a particular media might serve as curriculum for a topic, educators can apply an ecological perspective to evaluating learning tools.

What do we mean by a learning ecology?

Considering the role of digital media for learning and academic language development from an **ecological perspective** means considering the ways different forms of media, texts, and activity relate to each other and fit within a larger network of learning, experience, and interaction. A **learning ecology** includes a variety of tools, experiences, learners, and dynamics, all of which influence each other and therefore influence the broader environment in which learning takes place.



This Focus Bulletin will bring you the following resources:

- An interview with games scholar Constance Steinkuehler (page 4)
- Connections to WIDA's Essential Actions (throughout bulletin)
- A classroom reflection (page 7)
- A tool for evaluating media (page 9)
- Other resources and ways to continue the conversation (page 13)

Let's play!

Links to Essential Actions

The *Essential Actions: A Handbook for Implementing WIDA's Framework for English Language Development Standards* demonstrates the research-based practices that connect the WIDA standards and Can Do Philosophy. Through this bulletin, we will indicate areas where using carefully selected technology tools can support the Essential Actions that can help teachers plan for the academic language success of their students.

You can find the Essential Actions Handbook at www.wida.us/essentialactions.

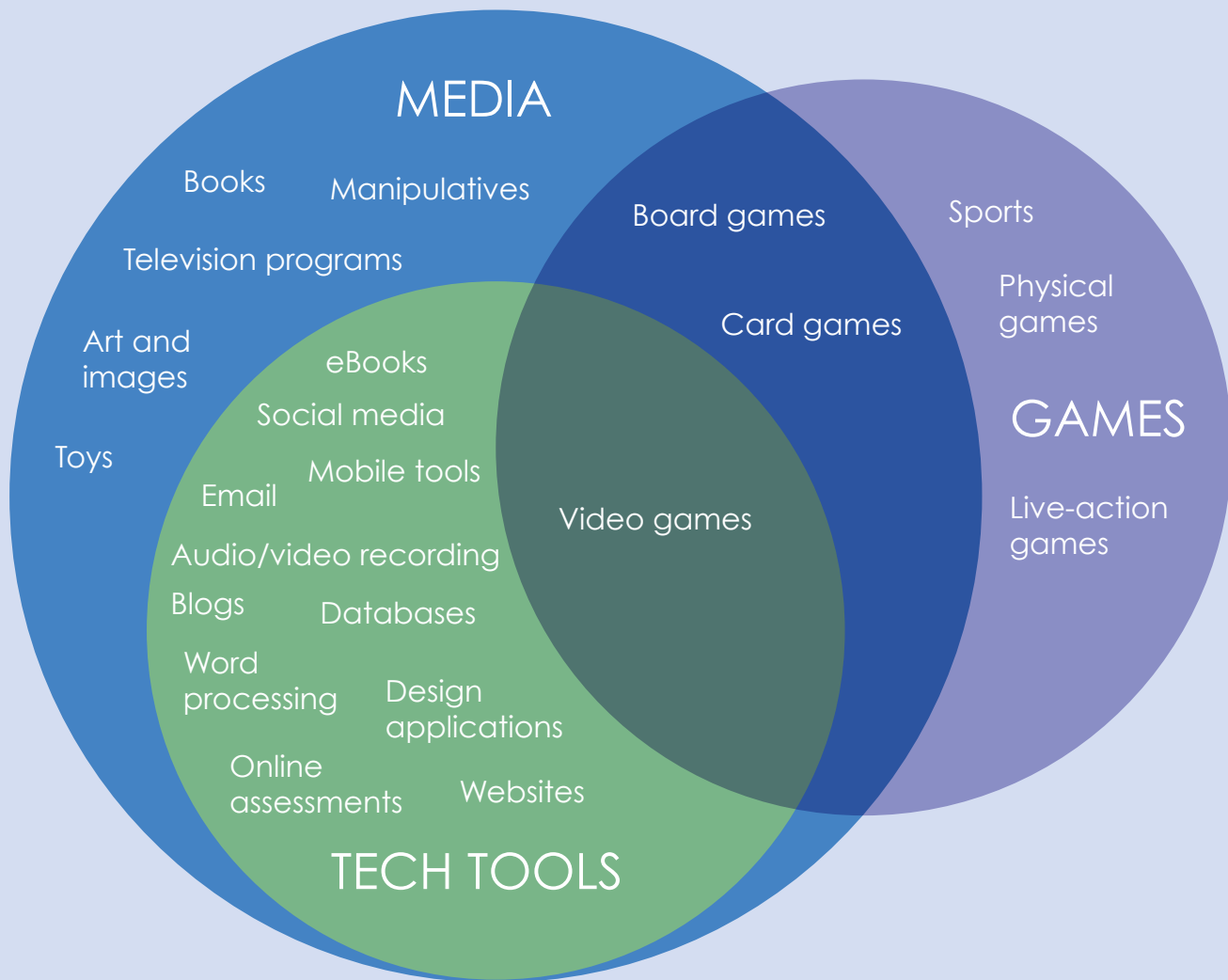
Games and Tech Tools and Media, Oh my!

You will see a variety of terms used in this Focus Bulletin. The potential classroom resources in the visual below are not an all-inclusive list but an illustrative sample intended to clarify some of the differences and similarities between **media**, **tech tools**, and **games**.

Media can be thought of in a broad sense as things with which people interact.

Tech tools include lots of variety, but the term is a little more specific than media in general. For our purposes, we'll be thinking of tech tools as digital tools.

Games have rules and goals, and often participants assume roles. Games may or may not be digital. They also may or may not include tangible or visual media.



Common threads tie these concepts together. In this Focus Bulletin, that common thread is their usefulness in facilitating student experiences and language learning.

Interview with Constance Steinkuehler

With Meagan Rothschild, WIDA Assessment and Design Specialist



Constance Steinkuehler is an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the School of Education, Department of Digital Media and Learning. She is also the co-director of the Games + Learning + Society Center (part of the Wisconsin Institute of Discovery) and president of the not-for-profit organization Learning Games Network. She is also a former senior policy analyst for the White House Office

of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), where she advised on national initiatives related to games and national priority areas like childhood obesity, early literacy, and STEM education. Her continuing research is on cognition and learning in both commercial games and games designed for learning & impact. She has a Ph.D. in literacy studies, and applies her knowledge of literacy practices to the design and research of game worlds and sociocultural practices around play and learning activity.

MR: How would you describe your work in the area of games and learning?

CS: I study games and learning. Specifically, the forms of social interaction around games, and cognition and learning across different disciplines such as science, literacy, mathematics, etc. My own bias tends toward asking how games are caught up in complex ecosystems that include text and reading and interest-driven learning and peers and teachers and parents.

MR: How much language is in games? What are the linguistic aspects of engaging in interactive media spaces?

CS: My early work was looking at what kids were actually doing when they were gaming. And what you find is that if you take what kids are doing as part of their game play seriously, you see games require and elicit so much reading and writing that it's hard to really understand how the two are in competition. So the better question is not whether games or technology are replacing reading and writing, but what kind of reading or writing does it actually recruit? With the help of the MacArthur Foundation, my research lab and I did a series of studies looking at what the reading was like. At this point it was working with middle and high schoolers that were playing a massively multiplayer online game. It indicated that not only aren't games replacing text, games elicit reading and writing that is actually fairly sophisticated. You end up with a picture where kids live in this ecosystem that includes lots of different media forms and texts.

Connecting to WIDA's Essential Actions: Action 10

Identify the language needed for functional use in teaching and learning.

What we say and what we write are for distinct purposes, such as expressing an opinion, apologizing, retelling an incident, or asking for advice; these examples illustrate some reasons for using language. In school, language functions refer to the linguistic processes students use to convey meaning as well as to create an interpersonal stance. To sound or write like a scientist involves a certain way of speaking and writing. In essence, language functions set up what students are expected to do with language within a particular context.

Games and other forms of interactive media can elicit different kinds of language use in meaningful ways. The languages of interaction can embody a variety of different functions. Therefore, supporting ELLs' academic language development through the use of tech tools requires thoughtful consideration of both the language needed to engage and the language targets for individual learner growth.

A good first step for Miss Estay would be to consider the language abilities of her ELL students and their language learning goals to help determine if the game was a good instructional choice. She would also decide whether she would need to provide any language supports to help ELLs engage in the game.

To prove her hypothesis that games were growing her students' academic language abilities, she decided to take a look at the language functions students were prompted to use and what kind of language was needed to comprehend game activity. She discovered students needed to ask and answer questions, explain their strategies, follow detailed instructions, and listen to colorful dialogue. She looked at how the game's language was supported with visuals, modeling, and interaction among players. After confirming that students' new language production was connected to these elements of the game, she asked herself how she could extend this learning even further with complementary activities and interactions.

MR: You talk about these ecosystems of texts and media forms... what does that mean for the ways games are specifically used to target language development?

CS: Right now there's a lot of conversation about vocabulary, especially with early childhood. And the first mistake people make is to think that the academic vocabulary that counts in school is

the only language or the only discourse that matters. It isn't. But the second mistake is this notion that we're going to *teach* children language through an app. We know that language development and language learning is far more complex than that. Children learn vocabulary through situated use in a meaningful context where they can figure out what that new word means. You can have technology that enables that conversation, and specifically enables academic vocabulary in that exchange, but you cannot replace another person. The right bet is to figure out what kind of games and scenarios we can set up between people that would increase the likelihood that certain vocabulary and discourse forms are used in targeted ways. It would happen between two or more people, often a teacher, care provider, or mentor and a kid, and could help a child acquire that kind of vocabulary and linguistic expression.

MR: How do games allow students to engage in higher order thinking and use academic language to solve problems?

CS: Let's take scientific reasoning and games, for example. It was Will Wright, one of the best designers of our time, who said that games are really just hypothesis testing. We looked at it empirically around the game *World of Warcraft*, which is a huge fantasy game played online. We found that on commercial forums related to the game, 86% of the data sample, which is representative, was social knowledge construction. When you dig into model-based reasoning you find the same patterns, that over two-thirds of the forums were focused on understanding the game system; understanding how components within a system, with relationships with each other, actually interact. So what you end up with is a world in which you see scientific argumentation and model-based reasoning practices that are beautifully married to what we want kids doing in school.

MR: You've mentioned the learning communities that develop around the contexts of some games. How do you see these learning communities facilitate language growth and literacy development?

CS: Language becomes meaningful in the context of activity. And that's where true academic language development happens. It's when you create environments that elicit that kind of language. Some newer games have leveraged crowd-sourced problem-solving and ended up with major in-roads even to science itself. There are games like *Foldit* based on protein folding, or the RNA game *EteRNA*, where you have game platforms built strategically for the purpose of bringing thousands of people together to not just solve game problems, but real scientific problems. So what does that mean about our model of learning, what does that mean for a teacher to think about authenticity? Or acquisition of a

Connecting to WIDA's Essential Actions: Action 8

Provide opportunities for all English language learners to engage in higher-order thinking.

With ample and varied instructional supports, every English language learner can engage in cognitively demanding tasks to demonstrate understanding and use of academic language and content. Even newcomer ELLs can be challenged using higher-order thinking when responding to different commands or questions, such as, "Show me how to _____." There is no reason why ELLs cannot make decisions based on evidence, produce creative work, construct original models, or invent using their imaginations.

Participation in game communities or engaging in the processes of digital media creation around specific content objectives can elicit not only different forms of language, but allow ELLs to engage in higher order thinking around real problems and challenges.

As Miss Estay's students played and encountered challenges in different games, they would talk to their peers rather than calling for her, as they might have if they were working on math problems or an essay. They would discuss what was happening and what they had tried, engage in collaborative problem solving, and justify why they thought certain solutions would work. Students of varying levels of English proficiency were working together to accomplish a goal, and by doing so, were engaging in higher order thinking skills like analysis and evaluation. They were also practicing oral language with increasing complexity and detail as they became more and more familiar with the game.

disciplinary domain? When you have a student not just acquiring certain sorts of intellectual strategies and forms of argument that are key to a discipline, but you have them actually contributing to knowledge and understanding itself in the domain... well, it certainly shakes up how we think about learning and education.

MR: What about the ways that games allow learners to use different roles and identities?

CS: Part of a learner’s job is trying to figure out “who am I?” I would argue that it’s developmentally valuable to have a space where you can take on an identity that isn’t attached to you... That isn’t attached to where you grew up, what your income is, what your body looks like, what your gender says you are, what your norms in your small town or you big town say you ought to be. It’s really interesting to have a space where you can take on a different identity and see yourself taking it on. It doesn’t mean that you always have to take on that identity; it just shows you that you’re not only one thing. There are multiple cultures and multiple identities that we can all take on in different roles. That’s part of the real draw and the real stickiness of what games are about.



Connecting to WIDA’s Essential Actions: Action 7

Design language teaching and learning with attention to the sociocultural context.

Language learning occurs within a social context that serves as the backdrop for knowing what to communicate (the task), how to communicate (the register), and why to communicate (the purpose). The context for language learning is significant within the classroom environment because it provides the reasons for academic language use. The classroom context should

- Honor and build upon students' identities and experiences
- Connect school to home, community, and other venues in the real world
- Offer authenticity and meaning to communication.

The thoughtful use of digital media as part of an ecosystem of learning can give language learners the opportunity to participate in interest-driven exploration, using the language of a disciplinary domain to do “real” work, and connect their identities and experiences to meaningful activity.

Miss Estay noticed that as her students played different games in class, different kinds of expertise emerged. Many students took naturally to playing games, and participation in game activity seemed to level the playing field as all students were able to respond to the same stimulus rather than relying on background knowledge or experience that varied from student to student. Sometimes content was fantastical; other times it was a simulation of real life. Different games would challenge or highlight different interests among students. Sometimes their expertise emerged from their real-life experiences. Other times, students became drawn to the game interactions because of the new roles they were able to explore. As a result, students engaged in broader classroom discussions that built on their in-game experiences and opened up new possibilities for social interaction.

This interview has been edited for print. Read the extended interview at: www.wida.us/resources/

Playing with Language: Using Games with English Language Learners

By Heather Brooke Robertson



Heather Brooke Robertson has taught PreK-8 English as a second language, English, bilingual science, history, technology, and Spanish in Milwaukee, WI., Madison, WI., Lake Geneva, WI., and Glendale Unified School District, CA. She was also a bilingual and literacy instructional resource teacher (coach) and a teacher leader in Madison's Professional Development Department.

She earned her Master's Degree in educational leadership and policy from California State University, Northridge. In addition to her classroom teaching in southern WI, Heather is a member of MIT and University of Wisconsin-Madison's Playful Learning Board, exploring connections between gaming and learning. After finding how deeply her students engaged when they felt connected to topics and characters, she helped found a book company, Books del Sur, which imports humorous and authentic books written by Latin American authors.

Educators and academics have described my ELL and bilingual students as having an opportunity gap and/or a lack of vocabulary. And as a bilingual person, I recognize that our classroom curriculum and resources are extremely culturally biased. In response, I employ a constructivist pedagogy where meaning is generated through the intersection of activities and experiences. My goal is to create a learning environment where my students can bring their own experiences to their learning, and connect to content and language development in ways that make sense to them. After many years of being overwhelmed by this task and after many conversations with my colleagues, we concluded that our English language learners needed more of what our students of dominant learning culture were getting—opportunities to connect new content and language to activity in engaging and meaningful ways. One of our realizations was that incorporating virtual games in our instruction could be a powerful approach for doing this, by bridging content and language in situations where the use of language has immediate implications in their game world activities.

Virtual gaming supports “best practices for ELLs” because it provides them with concrete experiences similar to field trips and much deeper experiences than using objects and pictures, which is a traditional and more limited ESL best practice. In our school-wide survey where nearly half of our students are ELLs, we found that almost all students had favorite games or apps and most were games that took place in a virtual world. Games were already

a part of their kid culture. I was inspired to try using a virtual world game with my students to support both content learning and academic language development. I thought that by carefully selecting games that connect the life-worlds of our students with targeted language and learning goals, we would be able to support learning in more engaging and dynamic ways.

My first game-based learning attempt took place in my weekly 1-hour heterogeneous (ELLs and non-ELLs) technology class. Because our students are already comfortable in various game worlds, this eliminated our need for pre-teaching how to play games, and we could just start playing. However, we wanted to ensure that the game play was actually developing vocabulary and understanding of concepts, so we paired it with explicit vocabulary instruction and small group discussions. During a class period I started with explicit instruction of game mechanics and vocabulary, students would play, and then we would discuss as a whole class.

Based on that first year of gaming experience, I have come up with the following guidelines for structuring learning activities that incorporate games:

- **Structure play and discussions in smaller chunks.** Originally the game play lasted between 20-25 minutes, and this was too long. Often students were at very different parts of the game, so it was challenging to harness the game actions and vocabulary necessary during a discussion that kept the students' attention.
- **Seamlessly incorporate games into classroom practice.** This led to more connected learning of the content as well as the ability to have smaller group discussions. Because I only worked with the students weekly, the classroom teacher would extend the targeted language and conversations, and therefore had a better understanding of vocabulary needs.



- **While all students can play regardless of language level, knowledge of target content and language may be minimal without explicit instruction.** When our class played *Citizen Science*, a virtual world game, my newcomer student from Nepal could advance through the game until he was faced with an argument (the assessment activity within the game). This is where I needed to scaffold the dialog through explicit instruction such as “this man” is a “limnologist”.
- **External supports and activity fit into my own ecology of games, and help me expand the student ecology of games.** I was able to maintain my sanity using a game in the classroom because I had a guide that included game dialogue and essential vocabulary. Using these tools, our class created “cheat guides” which helped frontload key vocabulary that they would encounter during gameplay. When I tried to include other games in my teaching, like *i-Civics: Win the Whitehouse*, I was unable to manage it for my broad group of students, even though the content was strong. I found the deep dive tools for game content were important for me to support my students. In games without such tools, I became overwhelmed by capturing the dialogue using screen shots, and did not have enough prep time (or evenings) to tackle it to the depth needed. This is where teacher communities can be helpful in creating supports to use games for diverse student groups.

This past year, I incorporated virtual games into my instruction in a different way. I used them during intervention time with ELL students. I had a small group of students that I worked with daily for 30 minutes. While pulled out from their regular classroom, I selected games and literacy activities related to the topics covered during reading, science, or social studies. This model addressed the smaller chunks issue mentioned above. I was able to meet the students’ needs better because I worked with them daily, I had a better handle on their academic skills, and our discussions allowed me to better assess the students content understanding. However, because it was a pull-out model, I had limited insight into how much this impacted their participation in the class work related to the topic. Next year, I’m looking forward to collaborating with classroom teachers so that I can bridge my two models. It would be ideal for all the students to be playing the same game, while pulling small groups of students for targeted vocabulary discussion, and connecting the big ideas to the content they are learning in their reading groups, science, or social studies class.

It’s amazing to think about how much using games have helped me level the playing field for my students. I’m struck by a memory of my first year teaching in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I was introducing a new topic to my bilingual sixth grade science students. The structured lesson plans stated that first I needed to build or connect with my students’ background. I assumed that since our school was less than three miles from Lake Michigan,

my students would have background about the lake. What seemed to be an obvious connection to prior knowledge proved to be otherwise in the life-worlds of some of my students. While that was just the first of many hundreds, possibly thousands of false assumptions I’ve inadvertently made about my students’ background knowledge, my goal in teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students has been to find creative ways to level the playing field. Over the years I’ve found that using games critically and carefully in my curriculum has helped me do just that.

Are you ready to think about tools for your OWN learning contexts for supporting language learners?

Well-selected tools can provide avenues for creation, expression, and the kinds of meaningful activities that facilitate academic language development, as well as frame various learner identities for ELLs. Different kinds of media afford different kinds of activity and interaction. Teachers can take advantage of different forms of media within a learning ecology, from traditional books to digital tools like creation apps, games, and interactive stories. In making those decisions, part of the consideration needs to be the way tools are used to promote interaction with content and interaction with each other. In planning for those interactions, teachers can look for ways to target specific forms of academic language use at the word/phrase, sentence, and discourse levels.

The evaluation tool on the next page was designed to align with research-based theories of language learning and activity, and was developed with educator feedback. The goal of the tool is to provide educators with support as they think critically about the ways different sorts of media and tech tools can help facilitate language development in their classroom contexts. The four core areas of evaluation are *Content*, *Context*, *Communication & Language*, and *The Individual Child*. While language becomes a part of activity through all four evaluation components (such as peer interactions, content language, activity elicited through media, etc.), the section on *Communication & Language* specifically address deeper linguistic needs and goals for the language learner, and should be used with knowledge of student language goals and language development standards.

Check out the tech tool evaluation resource on the next page to try it for yourself!

Evaluating Tech Tools for Learning & Academic Language

Software/Media _____

Platform _____

CONTENT

Core Questions	Challenges	Opportunities
What exactly are the learners watching/interacting with?		
Can the learners make sense of the content?		
Will they try to imitate what happens on the screen?		
What could be learned from the content? How might this relate to learning goals? Does this content support developing various literacies?		
How does this work with other classroom content?		
Are there ways to export evidence or view outcomes after the learner interacts with the media?		

CONTEXT

Core Questions	Challenges	Opportunities
What would the learners be doing if they weren't doing this?		
Where are they watching/interacting with the media?		
Is an adult helping them figure out what they see?		
How can this foster other kinds of play/experimentation?		
Does this activity involve peers? How?		
Does this foster connections to home? Co-viewing? Intergenerational play?		
Is the play competitive or collaborative?		
How is the learner physically interacting with the media?		

COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE

Core Questions	Challenges	Opportunities
What purposes for using language are elicited? (Retell, explain, argue, etc.)		
How are reading, listening, writing, and speaking being supported through the activities?		
How accessible is the language of the activity given the language learner's abilities (for example: instruction, prompts, and feedback)?		
What opportunities exist for new language acquisition?		
How do the situations and activities connect to reinforce/elicit academic language? How do the learners make meaning from the things they see and do?		

THE INDIVIDUAL CHILD

Core Questions	Challenges	Opportunities
Is this activity appropriate for this particular learner's age, state of development, or temperament?		
Does this media tool fall in line with appropriate levels of stimulation for this learner?		
What scares this learner? What makes him or her feel unsafe or unsure? Is there anything in this experience that could violate feelings of safety or scare the learner?		
Does this media tool have the power to trigger curious questions? Playful reenactments? Engagement? Joy?		
What roles and identities might the learner be assuming in the activity?		

REFLECTIONS

Core Questions	Challenges	Opportunities
Did the learners gain what you thought they would in content and language learning?		
What were the intended outcomes for content and language learning?		
What were unintended outcomes? How might any unintended outcomes be connected to content and language?		
What kinds of uses or applications should be considered for the future?		
Were there opportunities for facilitated extension activities?		
Did the learners expand their experiences (narrative, play, etc.) into other kinds of play or experimentation?		
What would you tell another teacher considering using this particular media tool? How might you help another teacher use this tool with language learners?		
How were learners/teachers/parents able to know what the learners did? How did this tool help the learners show what they know?		
How can this be used to help facilitate next learning steps and language goals? Did it make learning or creation or achievement visible to the participant? To others?		
What does this product do well? What doesn't this product do well?		

Resources:

Guernsey, L. (2012). *Screen time: How electronic media—from baby videos to educational software—affects your young child*. Philadelphia, PA: Basic Books.

WIDA Consortium. (2007). *English language proficiency standards and resource guide*. Madison, WI: Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.

Parting Thoughts

In her interview, Constance Steinkuehler addressed how she saw the future of games for impact and how she saw interactive forms of media in ecosystems of learning.

“In this work we’re doing, you’re not talking about having to build a technology that somehow replaces teachers and care providers. I think that’s a really irresponsible design proposition, when instead you could think about what forms of interactions can we design that are engaging and fun and that leverage human beings learning from one another. In my experience, that is the only way to see technology thoughtfully integrated into systems of education. It needs to be teacher-driven and teacher-initiated. Because it will not simply be done through researchers and designers, it has to come from teachers as well.”

What she sees is not an environment driven by companies and developers. She envisions learning systems that bring the expertise of educators actively into the folds of design. The learning ecologies she envisions are child-centered, and place students’ academic and linguistic needs at the center of our work. They would include different forms of media, activities, and engagement to facilitate meaning making. For educators like Heather Robertson, and for all who focus educational work on culturally and linguistically diverse students, this becomes particularly critical. Creative approaches to building learning ecologies of activity and interaction can elicit the language and knowledge needed for language learners to actively engage in their school-worlds and negotiate meaning in their broader life-worlds.

This conversation is just beginning in communities of educators. The discussions around games and media for learning must include the strengths and linguistic needs of language learners. What kinds of learning ecologies are you building? And how will you join the conversation?

“Effective uses of technology and media are active, hands-on, engaging, and empowering; give the child control; provide adaptive scaffolds to ease the accomplishment of tasks; and are used as one of many options to support children’s learning.”

~Technology and Interactive Media as Tools in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8 (A joint position statement from NAEYC and the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children’s Media, <http://www.naeyc.org/content/technology-and-young-children>)

JOIN THE CONVERSATION WITH #ELLEDTECH!

- What tools have you found that are useful in supporting language development for ELLs?
- What are your tried and true implementation strategies for integrating tech with ELLs?
- Where do you find your best tools, tips, and tricks for classroom use?
- What kinds of questions or unmet needs do you have as we think about appropriate educational technology resources for ELLs?

Tweet with us by using the hashtag #elledtech to keep the conversation going! And don’t forget to follow @WIDAConsortium!

If you don’t have your own Twitter account, you can always pop in to see what others are saying by searching for #elledtech at www.twitter.com.



WIDA 2014 National Conference

Will you be at the WIDA 2014 National Conference?

OCTOBER 23-25, 2014 | ATLANTA, GA

Meagan Rothschild will be presenting and facilitating a conversation about using the tool *Evaluating Tech Tools for Learning & Academic Language* introduced in this *Focus Bulletin*. Stop by and play with us!

For more information about the WIDA National Conference please visit www.widaconference.us



Wisconsin Center for
Education Research
University of Wisconsin–Madison
1025 West Johnson St., MD #23
Madison, WI 53706

Client Services Center toll free:
866.276.7735
help@wida.us
www.wida.us

Guest Contributors

Constance Steinkuehler,
Associate Professor in Digital
Media and Learning at the
University of Wisconsin–Madison
& Co-Director of the
Games + Learning + Society Center

Heather Brooke Robertson,
Lake Geneva School District, WI

Contributing Staff

Meagan Rothschild,
Assessment and Design Specialist

Julia Cortada,
Educator Resource Developer

Editors

Andrea Cammilleri,
Assistant Director of Teaching
and Learning

Rebecca Holmes,
Editor/Publications Coordinator

Design

Janet Trembley,
Wisconsin Center for Education
Research, University of Wisconsin–
Madison

LOOKING FOR RESOURCES?

Here are some mainstream educator sites that may include culled teacher feedback, lesson plan supports, standards connections, and professional networks. Connect information found here to the teacher media evaluation tool in this Focus Bulletin to make strategic media choices for English Language Learners!

Playful Learning

playfullearning.com

Playful Learning is a growing national network of educators who are interested in conversations around game-based learning through face-to-face summits and workshops, as well as sharing ideas via the web-based portal of games and supporting materials.

Graphite

www.graphite.org

Graphite is a platform through Common Sense Media that was created to make it easier for educators to find educator-evaluated apps, games, and websites for the classroom.

Educade

educade.org/lesson_plans

Educade utilizes teachers' expertise and knowledge, and equips them with tools and community to integrate 21st century tools, such as apps, games and maker kits.

(Please note, inclusion of these portals in this publication does not mean WIDA formally endorses the sites or referenced games, apps, and programs.)

References in this Bulletin

- Gee, J. P. (2005). Language in the science classroom: Academic social languages as the heart of school-based literacy. In R. K. Yerrick & W-M. Roth (Eds.) *Establishing scientific classroom discourse communities: Multiple voices of teaching and learning research* (pp. 19-37). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Gonzalez, N., Moll, L., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Gottlieb, Margo. (2013). *Essential actions: a handbook for implementing WIDA's Framework for English Language Development Standards*. Madison, WI: Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.
- Guernsey, L. (2012). *Screen time: How electronic media-from baby videos to educational software-affects your young child*. Philadelphia, PA: Basic Books.
- Himmele, P., & Himmele, W. (2009). *The language-rich classroom: A research-based framework for teaching English language learners*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.